

# fifth Estate

Winter 2017

## INSIDE:

**THE MYTH OF CHE GUEVARA**  
MLB

**FIGHTING THE NEW DRAFT**  
Edward Hasbrouck

**JUNE 11 - ANARCHIST DAY OF SOLIDARITY**  
Panagiotis Tsolkas

**WHY SURREALISM?**  
Penelope Rosemont



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Clandestine  
Insurgent Rebel Clown Army  
**GOOD  
CLOWNS!**



**Cultural Appropriation  
& Shaming**

\$4



# LETTERS

## Our readers respond

Send letters to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org) or Fifth Estate, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220  
All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten; letters may be edited for length

### Original Trauma?

I appreciate Chellis Glendinning's criticisms of modern, Western civilization, including modern agriculture, which has been highly detrimental to ecological and social balance in the world. (See "Linear Perspective, Fences & Nature's Glory," *FE* Summer 2016.)

However, I am very uncomfortable with her blanket application of psychoanalytic categories to identify ancient roots of human alienation, by supposedly diagnosing the symptoms of trauma and post-traumatic stress in all civilized people.

I don't believe that her oversimplified analogies with medical conditions caused by personal life experiences and those of families and cultural communities can help either our understanding of the problems caused by civilization and domestication, or those resulting from horrible conflict situations.

If all modern peoples are diagnosed as suffering from original trauma, how do we understand and respect the specific sufferings of those who are experiencing symptoms of direct personal trauma and post-traumatic stress, caused by genocide, war, enslavement, racism, rape, childhood abuse, environmental catastrophes, and the like?

The article also leaves me with the question of what her analysis can teach us about how to work cooperatively together to transform society into the less alienated world we want.

**Louisa Cabrera**  
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Louisa: Thank you for your insight and clarification. You are right to question the application of a category like PTSD to every individual who has been touched by western civilization.

I never meant in the essay nor in *My Name Is Chellis and I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization*, the book from which it was taken, to suggest that all of us have post-traumatic stress. Rather, I



hoped to make some sense of the culture/society at large and its institutionalized harming mechanisms.

Language is and always has been an inadequate means to reflect, describe, or define our experience of being alive. The best writers, I think, are the ones that come close, and most of those with any success are poets and bards, not psychiatrists and psychologists.

If you look at the history of language used to describe the vagaries of mental health, you find that the chosen words change as society, culture, and understanding changes, as in: possession-by-spirits morphs into hysteria, then to irritable heart, then to shell shock, and on to PTSD.

Twenty-two years ago, I gave it my best shot in the book in an attempt to penetrate to a deeper understanding of what the hell is wrong with us! And perhaps, if you follow through on your ideas of the origins/continuation of alienation and its attendant sufferings, you will find a more satisfying set of words and associations?

Meanwhile, as a psychologist specializing in recovery from PTSD, I am grateful for your distinction between the mental health problems of mass technological society and what one person needs to understand in order to heal.

**From the Altiplano,**  
**Chellis Glendinning**  
**Chiquisaca, Bolivia**

### Bob's Last Letter

The Summer *Fifth Estate* 2016 features an article by Leila Al Shami on the Syrian Revolution, "Challenging the Nation State in Syria." This follows a piece in the Spring 2015 issue by Neither East Nor West-NYC/CounterVortex's Bill

Weinberg, "Syria's Kurdish Revolution: The Anarchist Element & the Challenge of Solidarity," about developments in Rojava.

Al Shami is far more critical of the Rojava experiment. She says positive anarchistic things about Rojava, but then adds that "the PYD [Kurdish Democratic Union Party], which dominates the Self Administration, is an authoritarian party which has silenced, arrested, imprisoned, and assassinated other Kurdish opposition groups and members."

There is a civil war among Rojava watchers around the world, not only on the ground, where things can be cloudy. For a good, exactly researched source, check Bill's CounterVortex website. [ww4report.com/dailyreport](http://ww4report.com/dailyreport).

**Bob McGlynn, Neither East Nor West**  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

**FE note:** Bob McGlynn passed away after we received this letter. See his last article and a remembrance of him elsewhere in this issue.

### Unabomber Defense

In an introduction to a 1998 reprint in the Summer 2016 *FE*, "Unabomber Cops a Plea," by David Watson, the current staff condemned those who continue to support Ted Kaczynski, known as the Unabomber. The introduction says that the man's ideas were not new and resulted in the deaths and injury of up to 23 innocent people. Their arguments, however, are misguided. (See "Happy Birthday to the Unabomber?")

Kaczynski did, in fact, offer several new approaches to anti-civ ideas.

Continued on Page 45

# Time to Begin!

As we send this issue to the printer, the ghastly Shit Show known as the 2016 American presidential election has not yet concluded, although it will be over when you read this.

While one of the candidates expressed definitively more openly bigoted and authoritarian ideas, neither challenged the basic equation of life within the state and capitalism. The horrors of war, racism, environmental collapse, and oppression will continue regardless of the electoral outcome.

However, even if the forces of white, Christian nationalism have been defeated at the polls, neo-liberal politics at home and abroad, with its hyper-aggressive confrontations in Eastern Europe and Asia, leave the world at a perilous point.

As we begin our 52nd year of continuous publication, the future looks fraught with both danger and promise. Since 1999, the North American anarchist movement has built a solid infrastructure and theoretical base for action. Just as our ideas helped to define Seattle and Occupy, our participation now is critical to the construction of autonomous movements of resistance and revolution.

This issue follows our Summer 2016 edition. It is impossible to list everyone who brought it into being. A big thank you to all who participated and to our readers.

## fifth estate

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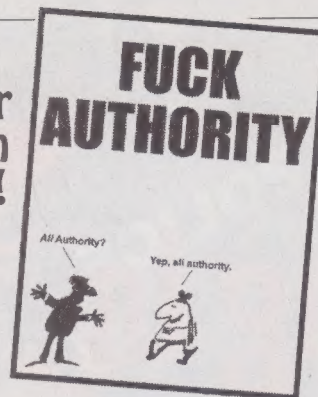
## The Poster That Keeps on Going!

When someone on the *Fifth Estate* staff over 40 years ago came up with the slogan, Fuck Authority, it was printed as a 29"x22" poster and tucked inside a 1975 issue of the publication, then a monthly tabloid.

On the reverse side was a catalog of titles offered through the paper's bookstore which was housed in the same space as its public office.

Recently, the poster was displayed at the *Fifth Estate's* 50th anniversary celebration at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in 2015 and was part of a 9338 Campau Gallery exhibit in Hamtramck, Mich. entitled, "Fredy Perlman and the Detroit Print Co-op." The poster was originally printed there.

It is now one of 87 posters repro-



duced in a new title from NYU Press, *Make Art, Not War: Political Protest from the American Century*, compiled by Ralph Young. The book draws on the Tamiment Library's Poster and Broadside Collection at New York University. Along with ours, posters from the major 20th century political and rights

movements are presented as testament to the human spirit which refuses to be repressed by the powerful.

Thankfully, Young chose our version rather than the tepid derivative, "Question Authority." That would come out as, "Please, sir, may I ask you a question about your decision that affects me." The answer to a question like that is always, "No!"

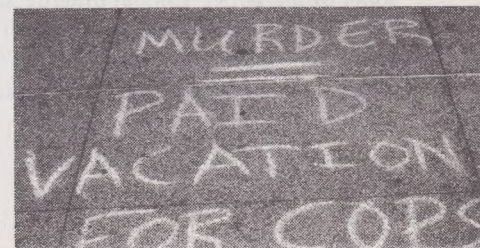
Fuck Authority!

*Make Art, Not War* is available from [NYUPress.org](http://NYUPress.org).

## Contents

Cover photo: Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army in Edinburgh, Scotland.

- |    |  |    |   |
|----|--|----|---|
| 4  | <b>Insurgent Rebel Clown Army</b><br>L.M. Bogad                    | 25 | <b>Spanish Revolution 80 Years On</b><br>Barry Pateman      |
| 7  | <b>Cultural Appropriation &amp; Shaming</b><br>Rod Dubey           | 28 | <b>Fisherman Out of Water - Poetry</b><br>Victoria Smith    |
| 9  | <b>The Myth of Che Guevara</b><br>MLB                              | 29 | <b>Women &amp; the Draft</b><br>Edward Hasbrouck            |
| 12 | <b>The Legacy of Omar Aziz</b><br>leila Al Shami                   | 30 | <b>Deterritorializing the Nation</b><br>Jesús Sepúlveda     |
| 14 | <b>Left Abets Genocide in Syria</b><br>Bill Weinberg               | 31 | <b>Draft Card Burning - Q&amp;A</b><br>Bruce Dancis         |
| 16 | <b>J11-Anarchist Day of Solidarity</b><br>Panagiotis Tsolkas       | 32 | <b>Rebel Friendships</b><br>Eric Laursen                    |
| 18 | <b>Marius Begins Hormone Therapy</b><br>Marius Mason Support Group | 35 | <b>Life of Sam Dolgoff - Review</b><br>John Clark           |
| 19 | <b>Some Friends of Mine - Poetry</b><br>Barbara Ruth               | 37 | <b>Why Surrealism?</b><br>Penelope Rosemont                 |
| 20 | <b>Crime As Spectacle</b><br>Jason Rodgers                         | 38 | <b>Anarchists as Boogyman - Review</b><br>Steve Izma        |
| 21 | <b>Bank Guard - Fiction</b><br>MK Punky                            | 40 | <b>Brazil Impeachment &amp; Left Media</b><br>Howard Besser |
| 22 | <b>Bob McGlynn Dies at 60</b><br>Bill Weinberg                     | 46 | <b>International Days of Chalking</b>                       |
| 23 | <b>Another Anti-Authoritarian Put Away</b><br>Bob McGlynn          |    |   |
| 24 | <b>Anarchism in Latin America</b><br>Rafael Uzcátegui              |    |   |





# Playing in the Key of Clown

Clown at the 2011 Toronto G-20 protests.

## Reflections on the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army

L.M. BOGAD

**A**t the July 2005 Carnival for Full Enjoyment in Edinburgh, Scotland, riot police mass on the streets with shields and truncheons, fireproof armor; all very imposing. They use their shields to shove protesters, who are dancing in the street without a permit.

But these are no run of the mill protesters. They are the trained cadres of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA), which, since its 2003 founding, has been spreading across the world.

These clowns do not run, nor do they fight. Instead they engage in a bizarre form of mass improvisational, clownish civil disobedience. They stay in the street and play with the police, like one enthusiastic group of kids playing with a sullen and unmoving group of other kids. They kiss the shields of the police, leaving lipstick marks, and write on them with lipstick.

They engage in absurd conversation, even cracking up some of the police who admittedly are surprised and are not at all trained to deal with this kind of interaction. Eventually the police break ranks and leave, to the cheers of the crowd of locals and media people who have amassed to watch the action.

CIRCA began in London in 2003 with a small group of creative activists—John Jordan, Jennifer Verson, Theo Price, Matthew Trevelyan, Hilary Ramsden, Zoe Young, and myself. We collaborated to create a yeasty cocktail of non-violent civil disobedience, clowning, Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, comedy improv, experimental choreography, and Rabelaisian/Bakhtinian cultural theory.

By our peak in 2005, in Edinburgh, we had 150 trained rebel clowns in a mischievous mirthful mass. Over the next few years CIRCA continued. It spread to Germany and several cities in the U.S. and elsewhere, but eventually waned as people moved on to experiment with other techniques and tactics.

**F**INALLY, EVEN OUR WEBSITE EXPIRED, which was a shame because it included our training manual which many activists around the world freely downloaded for a few tips and tricks. CIRCA now exists only in YouTube videos, articles and essays (and a chapter in my new book and in the social imaginary of our movements, that collection of stories and anecdotes we trade when we get together, looking for inspiration or a quick laugh.

CIRCA had several motivations from its beginning:

- 1) to provide a way for hardcore activists to escape burn-out and rigid dogma while staying active.
- 2) to bring into the movement people who had been turned off by the joylessness of aforementioned dogmatic and rigid (often boring) actions.
- 3) to achieve tactical surprise in interactions with the state

and corporations, by bringing a new, disruptive and playful form of direct action for which they were not yet trained.

4) to create mediagenic actions that would attract attention for our radical critique of capitalism, militarism, etc., both via viral internet images, and by speaking “through the media”—creating images so bizarre that even our ideological enemies would reproduce them, thus telling our story.

As Colonel Ofruth (my Clown Army name) I often was the media contact, providing the kernel of truth of our position to the swarm of media that came to cover our actions.

5) to counteract the demonization and criminalization of dissent by performing a charming, anti-stereotypical form of engagement with the public without compromising the radical content of our critique.

6) in some cases, to create a clowny cushion that protected other demonstrators from repression by standing between marchers and the police; it is politically more costly to club a clown.

We were reasonably successful in fulfilling these goals during our several-year run, in several countries. We even did it with a horizontalist structure of locally-organized affinity groups (“clown gaggles”), thus walking the walk of egalitarian activism with our big shoes.

**WE HAD OUR FLAWS TOO;** our costumes might have worked better if they were glossier and less crunchy. Perhaps the quality of our training could have been more consistent. Our mantra was, “serious, not solemn,” and we felt we could be ridiculous while still being radical, sincere without being self-righteous, stoic or stolid.

In New York City, where I moved after my time in the UK, I helped to start a local group of CIRCA that had its own method. We were less playful with the police because the NYPD were more hardcore and violent; you have to adjust your shtick to the local situation.

After some great actions during the 2004 Republican National Convention, this group morphed into an ongoing action called the Bike Lane Liberation Clowns, and their absurd, but playfully confrontational patrols, in which they confronted drivers parked in bike lanes on their unicycles, tricycles and the occasional bicycle, were a key element in the successful campaign to improve the infrastructure for bikers in the city.

There have been a series of clown-versus fascist actions across the U.S. and the world. Whether influenced directly or not by CIRCA and our training manual, doesn’t really matter. Much more important is the way this tactic replicates, perhaps independently, or through a sort of zeitgeist-of-the-radical-ridiculous. It’s the massing of clowns to confuse and surprise paramilitary/racist/rightist demonstrators.

Several years ago, a group went to the Southwest to heckle and throw off the right-wing, paramilitary Minutemen border patrol actions, calling themselves the Boredom Patrol and were pretty funny.

In Tennessee and North Carolina over the past ten years, there have been incidents in which KKK/neo-Nazi demonstrations have been met by local people dressed in red noses

## These clowns do not run, nor do they fight. Instead they engage in a bizarre form of mass improvisational, clownish civil disobedience.

and wigs, with silly signs and group shtick which mock the racists. In both cases, the Nazis had no countermove. They were simply mocked and laughed at until they went home.

The intent is not to trivialize the existence of the racist far right, but to burst their bubble. Racist demonstrations are intended to provoke fear and rage, to grab attention through physical violence and confrontation. It’s part of their dramaturgy to create an angry, screaming, and hopefully violent standoff.

A racist demonstration in Sacramento, California in June 2016 resulted in violent street fighting and a number of people on both sides were stabbed. This is the kind of scrap the fascists are prepared for and excited about. It’s their strong suit.

Clowns outflank this strategy with one that bursts the heavy emotional atmosphere. The silliness, the dumb jokes, the smiling and slapstick, are not just light stuff. It’s bursting the heaviness and turning the fascist spectacle into a flaccid circus.

The Clowns perform en masse (and this is important) *radical fearlessness*. It’s not a macho response, but it’s not cowardly either. The red noses go right up in the fascist’s faces, fearlessly. Neither fight nor flight response, but something different. It’s a demonstration of numbers, of a defiant anti-racist manifestation, and ideally it looks fun to be part of.

**MORE RECENTLY IN FINLAND,** a paramilitary group calling themselves the Soldiers of Odin (a sinister self-naming in this context, evoking far-right ideology), declared they were going to patrol the streets of Helsinki hunting for immigrants who they alleged were committing crimes.

A group of rebel clowns calling themselves the LOLdiers of Odin surprised the Soldiers, following them around, mocking and mimicking them and basically having fun at their expense. One LOLdier wearing a horned helmet and sporting a big beard, declared that he actually *was* the Norse god Odin and reached out to one of the fascists saying, absurdly, in English, “High five!!”

By doing this mocking counter-patrol, and video-documenting it on YouTube, they provide a model for other groups around the world; change the mood of the event, and also act as a clown “CopWatch,” or, in this case, “Fascist-Watch,” documenting the fascists to make sure they don’t get away with any bashings.

Radical confrontational clowning is only one item in the

toolkit of the movement, and like any tool, should be used in specific situations, not overused as a default in every setting.

Sometimes the perfect response is, in fact, solemn, beautiful, haunting, serious. But when the time is right, the red nose should be prepared, nostrils flared, at the ready for deployment.

L.M. Bogad is professor of political performance at the University of California at Davis. He is the author of the books,

*Tactical Performance: The Theory and Practice of Serious Play and Electoral Guerrilla Theatre: Radical Ridicule and Social Movements.*

He also wrote the play, "COINTELSHOW: A Patriot Act," published by PM Press.

Bogad has performed and led workshops in Tactical Performance around the world, most recently in Egypt, Argentina, Chile, Catalonia, and Latvia.

## Why join the U.S. Armed Forces when you can join the Rebel Clown Army instead?!

The U.S. army is no picnic and actually is far worse. Tons of money is poured into the recruiting campaign offering false promises. Our soldiers are being manipulated, fooled, and thrown into horrific situations for the benefit of corporations and war-profiteers far away from the battlefield.

The clown army is a much safer choice. We offer immediate training in clowning and our health insurance plan is unrivaled on the planet—"a laugh a day." But you be the judge:

U.S. ARMY	CLOWN ARMY
Squashes individual expression and free speech	Breeds creative goofiness and goofy creativity
Demands conformity and servitude	Liberates the imagination and imagines liberty
Lies about money for college	We don't lie
Lies about job training and employment	Train to be a clown for free, today!
Lies about gender and racial equality	We're all clowns, and a clown is a clown is a clown
Number of countries invaded pre-emptively for no good reason: sooo many	Number of pre-emptive hugs given to strangers, daily, for no good reason: more
Fight in a war	Tug-o-war
Yer officer yells orders in your face	Everybody yells with you and not at you
Drops bombs on kids	Kids love us
"Army of One"	"Army of Fun"
Lots of gas-guzzling Hummers	Long-winded bike advocacy
5-year commitment	What?
Boring uniform	Excellent gear. Have you ever worn a red nose? Red hot noses, hot pink, hot uniforms, so hot we're sweating
Core values: Kill, Rape, Plunder	Core values: Fun, Friendship, Freedom

Join CIRCA (Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army) and liberate yourself.

DON'T SETTLE FOR WORKING FOR CLOWNS.

BE ALL THE CLOWN YOU CAN BE!



# Cultural Appropriation & Shaming

## Dreads & Mohawks: To Whom Do They Belong?

ROD DUBEY

**O**n college campuses, in urban squats, at hip city venues, and at anarchist events, one often sees young white people sporting dreadlocks or Mohawk haircuts. However, there has been an increasingly aggressive push-back by those who designate this as cultural appropriation and are confronting and shaming those they deem guilty of the practice.

One famous shaming incident, captured in a viral video shot earlier this year and viewed by over four million people, shows Cory Goldstein, a white student at San Francisco State University, being berated for wearing dreads by an African-American undergraduate, Bonita Tindle.

Tindle tells Goldstein that he cannot wear dreads because, "It's my culture." In a separate interview, Goldstein responds that he shares the criticism of cultural appropriation, but that dreadlocks have appeared in many cultures and do not belong to any one group.

**T**HIS IS THE IRONY OF CULTURAL APPROPRIATION SHAMING; that it is often directed at people sympathetic to those doing the confronting. Anticipating potential confrontations, in one such example, some of the organizers of this year's Montréal Anarchist Bookfair issued a statement saying that while they do not condone bullying, that participants should be self-policing of their "clothing and headgear. . . keeping in mind that these choices can act as oppressive

forces toward other people. Cultural appropriation is harmful." So, people shamed are presumably asking for it.

### Cultural Appropriation

Such appropriation occurs when elements of a minority culture are adopted by members of the majority, often without an understanding or appreciation for its traditions. It is argued this is an act of colonialism that destroys unique cultures. The use of cultural elements, outside of their usual context, is seen as disrespectful. Something with spiritual significance or with reserved use (such as a Native headdress) might be used by anyone for any purpose including merely fashion.

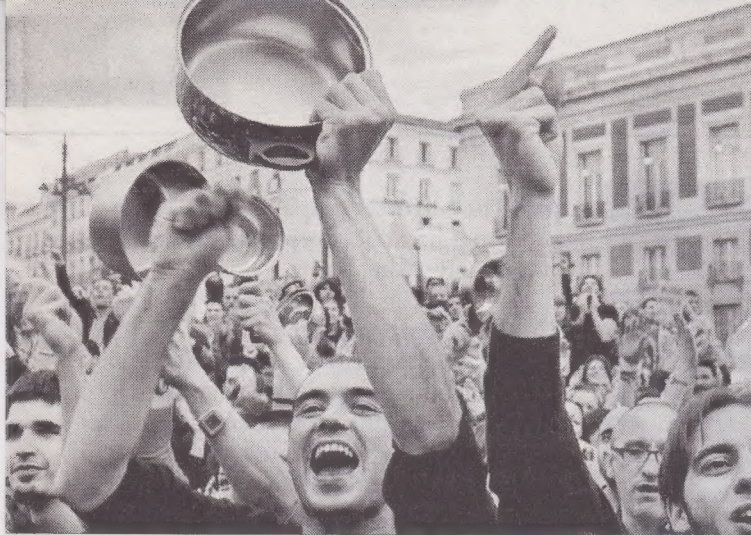
There are a number of problems with the arguments against cultural appropriation. First, cultures are amalgams. Even African-American and Native cultures are not pristine, but have been shaped by and include elements from many cultures (and their members continue to appropriate from other cultures).

The African-American musical form known as blues is a case in point. While certain rhythms, and call and response aspects of the blues primarily come from Africa, the pentatonic scale that is used – at least how blues is played in America – comes from the tens of thousands of indentured Celts shipped to the West Indies by Oliver Cromwell's England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

They lived on the same plantations and shared a culture with black slaves. So-called cultural appropriation can only occur when culture is conceived of as fixed, denying its obvious fluidity (current African-American culture is not slave culture, for example).

Trying to declare ownership of a culture is to assume that there is individual authorship of cultural practices. It is the same assumption behind copyright and art as commodity, and fundamental to capitalism. For opponents of cultural appropriation, all cultural elements come to be seen as objects with value and subject to theft; even hairstyles. The fact that cultural traditions undergo constant transformation belies the notion of individual authorship.

The arguments against cultural appropriation imply that we are inevitably separate, that there can be no rapprochement,



Argentina 2001

and that whites, in particular, must be artistically and socially censored because they cannot comprehend or use things respectfully. It suggests that white people are bound to be oppressors by virtue of their birth. The depressing implication here is that community is not possible.

Colonialism devastated traditional cultures. Native people were defined in negative ways – as savages, ignorant, heathens – supporting ideas of racial division, superiority, and hierarchy. With the notion of development, Natives became poor in European terms, needing to consume more schooling, religion, policing, and other aspects of white culture. This is a common description of colonialism.

In *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, Situationist Raoul Vaneigem argued that discourses about colonialism tied to race are no longer valid and redefined colonialism as a form of humiliation. As such, we are all now subject to colonial humiliation as consumers. We consume to avoid the humiliation of not having the requisite commodities. We become incomplete, in need, dependent, and infantilized. According to Vaneigem, “The problems of race and colour become about as important as crossword puzzles... Yesterday’s anti-colonialists are trying to humanize today’s generalized colonialism. They become its watchdogs in the cleverest way: by barking at all the after-effects of past inhumanity.”

### Shaming with pots and pans

Shaming, by those lacking power, has a long history in reversing authoritarian humiliation by turning it on its head and shaming the shamers. In “Rough Music Reconsidered,” Historian E.P. Thompson describes how communities came together in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain to humiliate scabs, blacklegs, sadistic judges, and those who violated community morality by parading the offender through town to a serenade of banging pots and pans.

These rough music events, known as charivari or casserole, were also used in peasant revolts and to maintain local autonomy against the expansion of class, wage labor, and state power associated with the industrial revolution. These were new forms of humiliation that destroyed communities and peasant autonomy. Charivaris are that period of inversion, where communities use humiliation to rule themselves.

It must be noted that shaming is not necessarily done to

## A serenade of banging pots and pans for those who violated community morality began in the 19th century & continues into this one in places as far away as Argentina and Montreal.

foster autonomy. It can be used by those in authority to enhance their rule (think of the Nazi parades of Jews). It is only when charivari reflects an entire community, insists on morality and does not institute a new authority that it functions to protect personal and community autonomy.

Thompson recognized that charivaris worked because those shamed were members of the same community, so felt the humiliation. It is difficult to imagine humiliating someone sitting in an off-shore gated community, but even without its ability to shame, charivari still matters as that form of action where communities come together against imposed authority and to challenge violators of their shared values. The usual relationship of people to authority is stood on its head as they seize the streets and refuse to install new leaders.

The 2011 Occupy movement was a moment of charivari. So were the 2012 Montreal casseroles. With the Québec government’s passage of a bill to limit protests amid widespread student strikes, huge casseroles occurred to resist the curtailment of civil liberties. These drew a large number of people from all parts of society who set aside typical divisions. The banging of pots and pans was a signal of community power. Non-marchers, including children and the elderly, went out on their steps and balconies to hammer pots and pans in solidarity with the marchers.

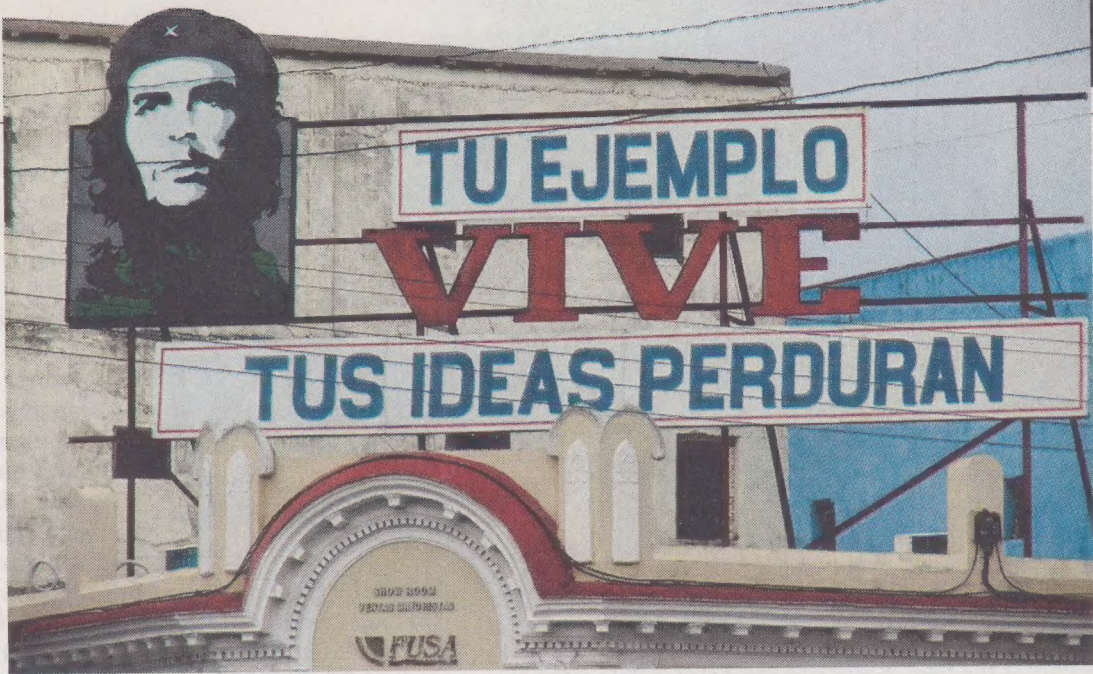
Argentina’s massive pot-banging *cacerolazos* of 2001-2 belied the seemingly ephemeral nature of charivari. The *cacerolazos* went beyond being protests to initiate autonomous alternatives. Several successive governments were disposed of, a barter network of millions was developed and many businesses went on to become worker owned and managed. This prolongation of inversion was the logical extension of communities uniting without regard to race, gender, class, or religion, and began with people occupying the streets and displaying that unity.

What overcomes colonial humiliation begins with the desire for close relationships and personal autonomy. “I see in the historical experience of workers’ councils... and in the pathetic search for friendship and love, a single and inspiring reason not to despair over present ‘reality,’” writes Vaneigem.

The attempt to insist on racial divides, borders, social separations, identity politics, to claim cultural ownership and authority, and to shame and police people for acts or styles which defy these confines, runs counter to an anti-authoritarian project.

Rod Dubey writes on cultural theory. His latest work is the Introduction to Donal McGraith’s *Leaving No Mark: Prolegomena to an Evanescent Art* (Charivari Press), an attack on the commodification of creativity.

Sign in downtown Cienfuegos, Cuba. Translation: "Your example lives; your ideas last."



## The Myth of Che Guevara

### Live like him?

MLB

Since the 1960s, Ernesto (Che) Guevara has been celebrated in leftist circles, and even among some anarchists as the model of a revolutionary.

A wide variety of musical and theater productions, political posters, T-shirts, bumperstickers, as well as advertisements for vodka, jeans, laundry soap, and promotions for church attendance bear his iconic image and proclaim: "Che, live like him!"

He is presented in innumerable books and articles as a shining example of an unrelenting fighter for justice and against imperialism and capitalism, a brave and determined man who rejected both bodily comforts and personal gain, who resisted and defied physical limitations and chronic health problems, and followed his dreams, a source of inspiration for youth everywhere.

But, is this the whole story? Are there other things about Che Guevara, how he related to other people, and what he was actually fighting for, that people should also know? Are there things that might not coincide with anarchist aspirations?

Some negative aspects of his personality and beliefs can be gleaned even from sympathetic sources. For example, in a well researched biography lauded by supporters, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*, Jon Lee Anderson writes that Guevara was an ardent Stalinist who admired the dictator's brutal rule in the Soviet Union.

Che was not politically naive and was fully cognizant of many of the brutalities that appalled others, including the infamous Moscow show trials of the 1930s that featured tortured Bolsheviks and others as traitors to be humiliated

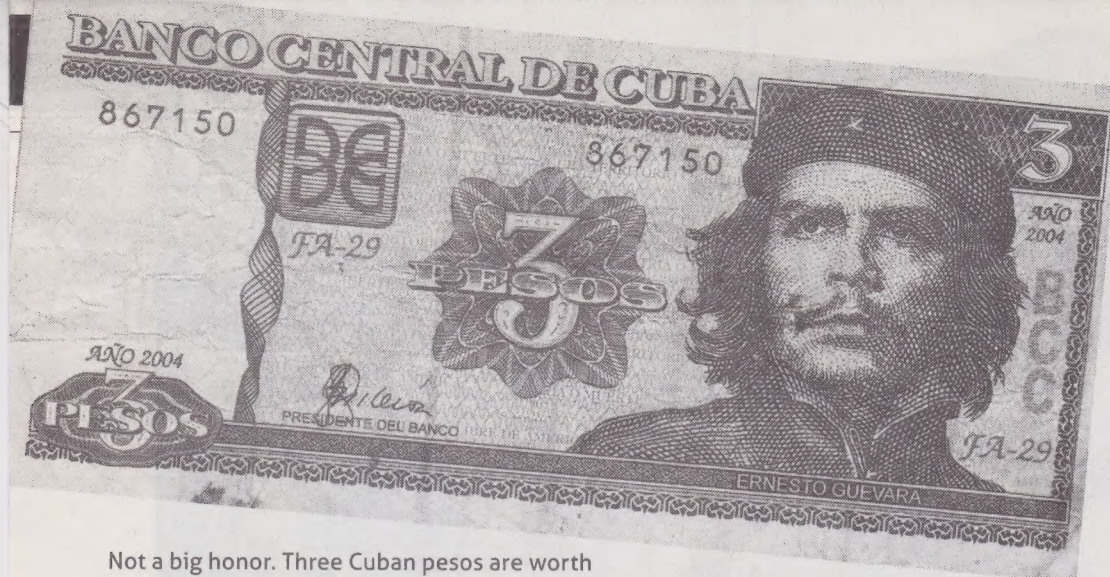
and executed, the Nazi-Soviet 1939 non-aggression pact, the crushing of the 1953 East German uprising and the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

Anderson also tells us that Guevara was convinced that individuals had to be subordinated to the collectivity, embodied in the political vanguard and the nation-state it developed. In the 1960s, he famously declared that "one has to constantly think on behalf of masses and not on behalf of individuals. . . It's criminal to think of individuals because the needs of the individual become completely weakened in the face of the needs of the human conglomeration."

Che maintained that the individual "becomes happy to feel himself a cog in the wheel, a cog that has its own characteristics and is necessary though not indispensable, to the production process, a conscious cog, a cog that has its own motor, and that consciously tries to push itself harder and harder to carry to a happy conclusion one of the premises of the construction of socialism—creating a sufficient quantity of consumer goods for the entire population."

Guevara's admiration for authoritarian Communist principles went well beyond the abstract. He was integrally involved in developing and consolidating the Cuban vanguard for instructing, guiding and controlling the activities of the majority of people, both before and after the Castro regime took power. >>>>>>

**Why do leftists admire an authoritarian Stalinist? With many, it's a window into what a society they aspire to rule would be like.**



Not a big honor. Three Cuban pesos are worth 34 cents. Plus, there is an old saying, "Phoney as a \$3 bill."

As part of the July 26 guerrilla force that Fidel Castro established in 1956, Guevara enthusiastically embraced strict military discipline and authoritarian hierarchy. He willingly submitted himself and others to this discipline.

Several admiring authors, including Anderson, also report that Guevara bullied those below him in rank, often publicly expressing harsh judgments of them without concern for their feelings. Moreover, he had no qualms about cruelly punishing those who fell short of what he demanded of them.

For example, on several occasions he is known to have implemented mock executions, in order to humble and break the will of those who had committed offenses. He also proved well-suited as an emotionally detached executioner and supervisor of executions both during and after the guerrilla struggle.

**H**OWEVER, MOST OF THE ACCEPTED leftist descriptions of Guevara are marred by the simplistic, dualistic perspective that can only recognize those who voiced criticisms of him or the Castro regime as counterrevolutionaries. They refuse to even consider that there might be valid reasons for opposing self-appointed liberators who act in authoritarian ways.

To gain a fuller understanding of the Cuban revolution as well as of the life of Che Guevara, it is necessary to read critical Marxists, such as Samuel Farber, and anarchists, such as Sam Dolgoff, Frank Fernandez, and Larry Gambone. Because of these authors' dedication to grassroots self-organized activity, and concern with opposition to dictatorial rule, they delve into aspects of Guevara's behavior and ideas that are all too often justified, glossed over or ignored by supporters of the Castro regime.

In "The Resurrection of Che Guevara" (*New Politics*, Summer 1998), Samuel Farber notes that Che Guevara unashamedly turned to the Cuban Communist Party, known at the time as the Partido Socialista Popular (Popular Socialist Party, PSP) for assistance in indoctrinating anti-Batista fighters with the Stalinist authoritarian ideas he admired as far back as 1957.

This despite the Party's history of collaboration with the

dictatorial Batista regime. While the guerrillas were still fighting in the Sierra Maestra, Guevara utilized PSP instructors for political education of cadres to help consolidate Communist influence among the aspirants to power.

In his book *The Politics of Che Guevara: Theory and Practice*, Farber delineates how Guevara and Raul Castro both later facilitated the Castro government's adoption of the Soviet model of bureaucratic, centralized "monolithic unity."

Once Batista was overthrown, they both worked to consolidate the new government's power to administer society, instituting militarized hierarchical leadership in every phase of life. Guevara famously proclaimed that he wanted the entire Cuban nation to become a guerrilla army, always thinking and acting as part of a disciplined military. And he never wavered in his belief in the state as the institution best suited to shape the development of the new kind of person he wanted to create.

Once Batista was overthrown, they both worked to consolidate the new government's power to administer society, instituting militarized hierarchical leadership in every phase of life. Guevara famously proclaimed that he wanted the entire Cuban nation to become a guerrilla army, always thinking and acting as part of a disciplined military. And he never wavered in his belief in the state as the institution best suited to shape the development of the new kind of person he wanted to create.

In early 1959, in consultation with agents from the Soviet Secret Police, Guevara, along with other top Cuban government officials, created a state security apparatus known as G-2. Guevara himself became the head of G-6, another agency in charge of ideological indoctrination of the military.

Che Guevara also had a key role in creating the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, locally and regionally based bodies for spying on and controlling people in the neighborhoods where they live.

This machinery was used from early on to repress dissidents, including anti-Communist democrats, socialists, and anarchists who challenged the consolidation of a single-party dictatorship in Cuba. Many of those who had been part of the July 26 Movement in the cities or as guerrillas in the mountains were not spared.

**I**N BOTH HIS ARTICLES AND BOOKS, Farber notes that Guevara was intolerant of individuality, and opposed to "politically conscious, independent-minded, rational individuals who hammer out collective goals and programs through democratic discussion and voting."

Not all dissenters were right-wing as Castro regime supporters would want people to believe. Farber describes leftists in the July 26 urban underground who were anti-imperialist, but had a "strong critique of the Communists, who they considered to be conservative and sectarian," and who they hated because of their collaboration with the Batista regime for most of its existence.

One glaring omission from Farber's writings is discussion of the anarchists who were part of the anti-Batista resistance and were among the earliest victims of the Castro regime's

repression when they dared to express dissenting opinions. Many were punished with imprisonment or even death. This is clearly documented in *The Cuban Revolution: A Critical Perspective* (1976) by Sam Dolgoff, and in *Cuban Anarchism: the History of a Movement* (2001) by Frank Fernandez, an exiled Cuban anarchist union activist.

In February 1961, Guevara became the head of the newly created Ministry of Industry, and supervised the completion of the subjugation of the trade union movement, making it a tool of the state, while justifying this policy with the argument that the government was the best representative of the interests of the people.

**H**E WAS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN suppressing independent union activists, including anarcho-syndicalists and other non-Communists. Fernandez describes how the combined application of political manipulations, lying propaganda and brutal repression succeeded in completely destroying the Cuban anarcho-syndicalist movement, something neither the Spanish colonialists nor a succession of dictators could do.

In *Saint Che: The Truth Behind the Legend of the Heroic Guerilla, Ernesto Che Guevara*, (1997) Canadian anarchist author Larry Gambone describes the active role Che played in the elimination of the remnants of workers' control of their unions, making it much more risky for workers to engage in strikes or other on-the-job resistance. Guevara strongly supported Law 647, which specified that, "The Minister of Labor can take control of any union, dismiss officials and appoint others" when he deems it necessary.

Guevara was also the prime author of the policy requiring people to do unpaid, so-called voluntary work in order to develop communist consciousness. As the head of the Ministry of Industry, he developed a system for punishing employees for moral offenses not specified in the criminal code, such as favoritism shown to relatives or friends, intentionally covering up a mistake, or having an affair with another man's wife.

Those judged guilty of such offenses were expected to volunteer to go to a special labor camp at Guanahacabibes, the westernmost point on the island, where they worked under very harsh conditions, for between a month and a year depending on the offense.

This practice set the precedent for the later development of non-voluntary, non-criminal labor camps known as Military Units to Augment Production for the punishment of those deemed political dissidents and social deviants, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, practitioners of Afro-Cuban religions, and others.

Some of these policies have been made less stringent or stopped since Che's death and the end of the Soviet Union, and the Cuban state now tolerates homosexuality and offers perhaps the best medical support for AIDS victims in the world—a few decades too late for those oppressed by the earlier cruel treatment.

Moreover, the regime still retains the form that Guevara helped give it—a centralized one-party state that closely su-

pervises public expression and limits grassroots self-activity of all sorts.

Are these really the kinds of accomplishments anarchists aspire to?

Did Che Guevara live in a way compatible with the struggle to create a non-hierarchical, self-organized and egalitarian society, in which people decide their own fate without reliance on dictates from above?

The answer should be an unequivocal, "No!"

MLB lives in the Pacific Northwest. They do not play or watch baseball.



## Ukrainian & Russian Repression

**O**ver the past year, ruling elites in Russia and Ukraine—often in collaboration with fascist gangs—intensified active repression of those who dare to express dissident points of view on a wide range of topics, from workers' demands for back pay, to the rights of ethnic minorities, to antifascist activities.

In our Summer 2015 issue we reported the plight of Crimean anarchist and antifascist Alexander Kolchenko and Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, who were arrested in May 2014.

They are accused by the Russian security agency of participating in a fascist Right Sector group, which the authorities termed a "terrorist" plot to destroy essential utilities, rail bridges and power lines, and set fire to offices of pro-Russian political organizations in Ukraine.

In August 2015, they were put on trial and, despite their long histories of opposing right-wing groups, the two were found guilty. Kolchenko was sentenced to 10 years and Sentsov to 20 years, both in a high-security penal colony. The charges are politically motivated and grossly inflated and their trials have been condemned by human rights observers.

Sentsov and one of the main witnesses for the prosecution say they were tortured, but ignored by the court.

The fate of Kolchenko and Sentsov appears to be subject to the Putin administration's foreign and domestic policies. Attempting to legitimate their annexation of Crimea and brutal treatment of domestic critics, Putin and other Russian power-holders are using the dissidents as bargaining chips in a familiar and disgusting political game.

Supporters report that both Kolchenko and Sentsov remain defiant against the state and are holding up under very trying circumstances. They deserve our solidarity and support.

Readers can send letters (which will be translated and forwarded), and learn about other forms of support via [solidarityua.info/en/kak-pomoch-2/napisat-pismo/](http://solidarityua.info/en/kak-pomoch-2/napisat-pismo/)

More about Russian anarchist prisoners at [avtonom.org/en/](http://avtonom.org/en/).

2011 protest in Daraya, Syria calling for the fall of the Assad regime.



Building autonomous, self-governing communes in Syria.

## The Legacy of Omar Aziz

LEILA AL SHAMI

*"A revolution is an exceptional event that will alter the history of societies, while changing humanity itself. It is a rupture in time and space, where humans live between two periods: the period of power and the period of revolution. A revolution's victory, however, is ultimately achieving the independence of its time in order to move into a new era."*

—Omar Aziz

Omar Aziz was in his sixties when he returned to Syria in 2011. He'd been working for an information technology company in Saudi Arabia but now he wanted to participate in the uprising raging against the four-decade dictatorship of the Assad family. Together with other activists, Aziz began distributing humanitarian assistance to displaced families from the Damascus suburbs under attack by the regime.

He was inspired by the ongoing protests in the face of regime bullets and tanks, yet believed that demonstrations alone were not enough to break the regime's dominance, and that revolutionary activity should permeate all aspects of people's lives.

Before his arrest on 20 November 2012, and death in prison in February 2013, he promoted local self-governance, horizontal organization, cooperation, solidarity and mutual aid as the means by which people could emancipate themselves from the tyranny of the state.

Writing in the eighth month of the revolution, when protests were

still largely peaceful and communities still lived under the authority of the state, he argued that "the revolutionary movement remains separate from daily human activities."

He continued: "there are 'divisions of daily work' between day-to-day activities and revolutionary activities." The risk lies "in the absence of correlation between the spheres of daily life and the revolution itself."

Aziz advocated the establishment of local councils to narrow this gap. In his vision the councils, made up of volunteers with experience in various fields, should have a number of responsibilities: finding safe houses for the displaced, organizing on behalf of detainees in the regime's prisons and providing support to their families.

Aziz also believed that it was the role of the councils to promote human solidarity and cooperation by providing a forum in which people could collectively find solutions to the problems they face, and to build horizontal links between councils in different regions.

He argued that the councils should also coordinate the resistance to the state's takeover of land in cities and suburbs and the eviction of residents to make safe residential zones for government officials and army officers, shopping areas, and the implementation of other business plans in order to accommodate the wealthy.

A few months later, Aziz wrote a second paper. The situation in Syria was changing rapidly. The state's brutal response to the protest movement led to the militarization of the revolution as people took up arms in self-defense. And land was beginning to be liberated.

The community organizing the uprising had brought about inspired him, such as organizing food baskets and converting houses into field hospitals. Such acts, he believed, showed "the spirit of the Syrian people's resistance to the brutality of the regime, the systematic killing and destruction of community."

**H**E DESCRIBED HOW ACTIVISTS formed coordination committees at the beginning of the revolution to organize media coverage, document activities and record regime violations, and how they then expanded to include emergency aid and medical services. He believed that new relationships were being formed which enabled people to break free of the state's dominance, and he saw this as evidence of a transformation occurring in social relationships and values.

For Aziz, this independence was the path towards liberation.

According to Muhammed Sami Al Kayyal, one of Aziz's comrades, "Omar Aziz stood for the complete break-up of the state in order to achieve collective liberation without waiting for regime change or for one ruling power to replace another. He believed that communities are capable of producing their own freedoms regardless of political vicissitudes."

Aziz recognized that the time of revolution was the moment the people themselves should claim autonomy and put in place as much of an alternative programme as possible. He again called for the establishment of local councils, this time highlighting more roles such as coordinating with relief activities, medical committees and educational initiatives. Building autonomous, self-governing communes throughout Syria, linked through a network of cooperation and mutual aid, organizing independently of the state, he believed a social revolution could be initiated.

**AZIZ HELPED FOUND FOUR LOCAL COUNCILS** in the working-class suburbs of Damascus, before his arrest. One was in the predominantly agricultural town of Daraya. This town had a history of non-violent civil resistance, existing prior to the revolution with religious, not secular, roots. Its activists followed in the tradition of liberal Islamist scholar Jawdat Said, who called for non-violent civil disobedience, democracy and the rights of women and minorities.

In Daraya, young men and women had organized campaigns against corruption as well as protests against the Israeli invasion of Jenin refugee camp in 2002 and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. This protest, daringly organized without regime permission in a police state, led to the imprisonment of several activists.

When the revolution broke out in 2011, Daraya's youth from both Muslim and Christian backgrounds took to the streets calling for democracy and the downfall of the regime. They held flowers as a symbol of peace in the face of soldiers sent to shoot them. Many were rounded up, detained and tortured.

In August 2012, the town was subjected to a horrific massacre; hundreds of men, women and children were slaughtered by regime troops. This brutality only increased the determination of the resistance. Three months later the regime was driven out by locals who had taken up arms in self-defense. The town was now completely in the hands of its residents, and Daraya's commune was born.

A Local Council was established on 17 October 2012, to manage the town's affairs and help the internally displaced and injured. Its 120 members chose executives by vote every six months, and the council head and deputy were chosen in public elections, some of the first free elections to have occurred in Syria in over four decades.

The Council provided all essential services such as water and electricity to the approximately 8,000 residents who remained from a pre-uprising population of 80,000. It set up a relief office which operated a soup kitchen and tried to build self-sufficiency by growing crops which it distributed to residents.

The council ran three primary schools (all other education-

April 2016. Women in Daraya calling for an end to the siege imposed on the town by the Assad regime. spelling out SOS.



Alongside the activities of the council, a group of women founded Daraya's Free Women to organize protests and humanitarian assistance.

al facilities were out of operation due to repeated aerial bombardment). A medical office supervised the only field hospital which provided for the sick and wounded. Daraya's autonomy was defended by a local Free Army brigade which was subject to the civil authority of the council.

Daraya represented the antithesis of the Assadist state. The people themselves built a society which was democratic and free. Alongside the activities of the council, a group of women founded Daraya's Free Women to organize protests and humanitarian assistance. They began producing and distributing an independent magazine called *Enab Baladi* (Grapes of My Country) to challenge the regime's media monopoly and promote peaceful resistance to counter the state's sectarianism and violence.

**ACTIVISTS BUILT AN UNDERGROUND LIBRARY**, a safe haven where people could go to read, learn and exchange ideas. Graffiti artist Abu Malik Al-Shami painted hope onto Daraya's bombed out walls.

But, in November 2012, the regime implemented a starvation siege trapping residents inside and stopping food and medical supplies from entering. Those who tried to flee or forage in surrounding land were shot by snipers. Poison gas, napalm, and over 9,000 barrel bombs were dropped on Daraya.

The Local Council repeatedly called on the humanitarian community to fulfill its promises to break the siege: "We are being punished for daring to rise up peacefully for our freedom and dignity," one statement said. "There are no extremists like ISIS here or Nusra. Those defending our neighbourhoods are all locals, protecting the streets from a government

that has tortured, gassed and bombed us and our families.” Women and children also held protests, recording and uploading them to the Web, calling on a deaf world to break the siege and end the regime’s violence. By the summer of 2016, the situation had deteriorated. A Jordanian/U.S. arms embargo on the Southern Front, combined with pressure on the coalition of secular and democratic Free Army forces to back off on attacking the regime forces there, had freed up Assad’s resources to intensify the assault on the town. The last remaining hospital in Daraya was destroyed and agricultural land, the sole source of food, was seized and crops burned.

With a limited supply of weapons, no assistance from outside, facing starvation, the resistance in Daraya held out for four years against the state and its imperialist backers. But on 25 August 2016 the town fell to the regime. All residents, both civilians and fighters, were evacuated, perhaps permanently. Some civilians evacuated to the Syrian government controlled town of Harjalleh were arrested and are now in the regime’s dungeons. Assadist troops celebrated their ‘victory’ in an apocalyptic waste land of destroyed buildings, in a town empty of its people.

Omar Aziz didn’t live to see Daraya’s remarkable achievements. Nor was he able to witness other experiments in local self-organization, with varying degrees of success, across the country. These local councils are not ideological but practical. Their first concern is to keep communities functioning in areas where the state has collapsed.

## How the American Left Abets Genocide in Syria

BILL WEINBERG

Today, many American leftists are accepting and even promoting the propaganda of the dictatorial regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad. They overwhelmingly stand on the side of fascism and genocide in that ravaged country.

In areas the Syrian regime controls, it is carrying out a systematic extermination of those suspected of dissent—beginning with prisoners. Poison gas has been used repeatedly. Starvation has become a weapon of the war, with the regime denying food aid to besieged areas.

Most leftists claim they are just against U.S. intervention. But the facts demonstrate otherwise.

The ANSWER Coalition, a remaining pillar of the diminished anti-war movement—whose ironic acronym stands for Act Now to Stop War and End Racism—supports

They remain independent of political or religious directives, focusing instead on issues of immediate relevance such as service provision and food assistance. They work through the prism of their own culture and experience. As alternatives to state authoritarianism, their libertarian tendencies are undeniable.

By March 2016, it was estimated that there were 395 active councils in cities, towns and neighbourhoods, half of them concentrated in Aleppo and Idlib provinces. This estimate was made a few months following Russia’s military intervention to prop up the failing regime, which saw the loss of great swathes of liberated territory, placing these autonomous communities under threat. At the time of writing, other revolutionary suburbs around the capital are at risk of falling to the regime as a result of its “kneel or starve policy.” So too is Al-Waer, the last remaining revolutionary stronghold in Homs. And the 300,000 residents of liberated eastern Aleppo are under siege once more.

These experiments in community democracy pose the greatest threat to all the states now involved in Syria (whether pro- or anti-regime) as well as to the extremist and authoritarian groups which seek power for themselves. This is why they are under such savage attack.

Leila Al Shami is co-author, with Robin Yassin-Kassab, of *Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War*. She lives in Scotland and blogs at [leilashami.wordpress.com](http://leilashami.wordpress.com).



Democracy Now! features guests who constantly declare that the Assad regime is the only hope for stability in Syria. It took an online petition to get program host, Amy Goodman, to invite a Syrian activist to appear on the show. Pictured is Yasser Munif of Global Campaign of Solidarity with the Syrian Revolution.

Assad openly. Their rallies feature placards with the dictator’s portrait and the flag of his regime (which replaced the Syrian national flag when his father seized power in 1971). ANSWER began as a front group for the authoritarian Workers World Party which openly supported North Korean dictator

Kim Jong-il and Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic, so their support for Assad is not surprising.

But less openly pro-Assad elements still mouth the regime propaganda line that all the opposition in Syria consists of CIA-backed jihadists. This ignores the reality of the Syrian conflict, which began in 2011 as a spontaneous popular revolution—part of the general upsurge throughout the Arab world. It only escalated to civil war after the regime's security forces serially massacred unarmed protesters. The civil resistance movement that began the revolution—secular, pro-democratic, and independent—continues to exist, even as it has been pushed from the world headlines by utterly ruthless armed actors.

Some anarchists in the U.S. have mobilized in support of the Syrian Kurds, who have declared a left-libertarian autonomous zone in their region known as Rojava. (See Fifth Estate #393, Spring 2015 and #394, Summer 2015.) While this solidarity effort is to be encouraged, most stateside anarchists have shown little awareness of the civil resistance movement among the Arab majority of Syria, which also has currents influenced by left-libertarian thinking. (See FE #396, Summer 2016.)

This failure of solidarity is pronounced, as well, in U.S. left and progressive media. Earlier this year, Democracy Now! host, Amy Goodman, was petitioned online to invite Syrian activists as guests on her nationally syndicated radio and TV show. Particularly recommended were Leila al-Shami and Robin Yassin-Kassab, co-authors of *Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War*, newly released from Pluto Press. (See al-Shami's Summer 2016 *Fifth Estate* article.)

**THE PETITION NOTED THAT ON APRIL 25,** Democracy Now! devoted nearly a full program to a Goodman interview with Seymour Hersh, who can now only be considered an open propagandist for the Assad regime. In the interview, he applauded Russia's intervention in Syria as "effective." The petition noted that Russia had killed 2000 Syrian civilians, and bombed multiple hospitals.

Hersh has said far worse in his many other appearances on "Democracy Now!" In a 2013 broadcast, he declared that Assad is "the only game in town, whether you like it or don't like it." According to Hersh, the secular opposition has been "overrun by jihadists." So, in his view, the Assad regime is the only hope for stability in Syria.

Not only do such heroes of the contemporary left as Hersh offer no solidarity to the secular resistance in Syria—they deny that it even exists. And they hail the mass-murdering dictator as guarantor of "stability."

By the time al-Shami and Yassin-Kassab were finally contacted by Goodman, they had completed their North American book tour and left for Europe. Giving credit where it is due, Goodman did, partially, make amends.

On May 13, she featured a segment with this very refreshing title: "Amid Ongoing Conflict in Syria, Activists Work to Keep Alive Revolutionary Spirit of 2011 Uprising." Interviewed was Yasser Munif of the Global Campaign of

**Far worse is Green Party Jill Stein's Green Party running mate, Ajamu Baraka, an active enthusiast for Bashar Assad who issued a statement hailing Assad's thoroughly controlled pseudo-elections confirming his inherited dictatorial rule.**

Solidarity with the Syrian Revolution, who spoke about the resurgence of protest and civil activism in Syria since a recent lull in the fighting.

The petitioning of Amy Goodman paid off. But she has still featured Seymour Hersh (in typically non-adversarial interviews) far more often than she has featured Syrian activists who represent the civil resistance on the ground. On the DN! webpage, where the Munif interview was displayed, the numerous dictator-shilling comments from Goodman's followers were as disgusting as they were predictable: the fruit of years of pro-regime programming on America's foremost leftist radio/TV news show.

Worse still is Counterpunch, one of the most widely read online news sites on the American left despite its propensity for giving voice to paleocons and exponents of the far right if they take positions in support of the dictatorships in places like Syria, Iran, and Belarus.

But this Jan. 29, they outdid themselves, posting a piece titled, "The Rise of ISIS and Other Extremist Groups: The Role of the West and Regional Powers." The writer was none other than Bouthaina Shaaban, official public relations advisor for Bashar Assad since 2008. This time not just a useful idiot of the Anglo-American progressive talking-head set, nor another paleo-right dictator-enthusiast, but an actual paid flack of the dictatorship.

The piece took the usual line, portraying the Syrian Revolution as contrived by the West and a jihadist initiative from the start. In other words, a perfect reversal of reality.

**THE SYRIAN REVOLUTION SHAMEFULLY RECEIVED** no support from the outside world for years, which is what allowed the jihadists to gain a foothold after the regime that Shaaban speaks for attempted to drown the peaceful protest movement in blood. Shaaban offered not a word about these massacres, but painted the emergence of an armed resistance as an arbitrary and foreign-fomented response to what she characterized as the "conciliatory" approach of the regime!

Shaaban is in effect the Goebbels of Damascus—defending the practices of the Assad regime defiantly and charging Western media with presenting a false picture of her government. For her work, she was rewarded with a typically gushing interview by Robert Fisk, another icon of the left, in Britain's *The Independent* on Oct. 27, 2011. He did ask her about charges of the Syrian government's repeated massacre

of protesters. But the headline trumpeted her disingenuous retort: "The army was told not to fire at protesters."

Then, there's Jill Stein, 2016 presidential candidate of the Green Party, whose popularity soared among lefties after Bernie Sanders conceded the Democratic Party nomination to Hillary Clinton. Stein has repeatedly engaged in parroting of Assad regime propaganda.

After the Ghouta sarin-gas attack in 2013, when Obama briefly threatened air-strikes against Assad's military forces, Stein said: "President Obama's rush to war risks a repeat of 2003, when President Bush's order to invade Iraq prevented UN inspectors from discovering that Saddam Hussein's alleged WMDs, one of the stated reasons for war, did not exist."

Talk about fighting the last war! To say this days after a chemical massacre in which some 1,400 perished simply demolishes all the Green Party's empty talk about human rights. The chemical weapons in Syria assuredly existed, and still do, if we count the repurposed chlorine that the regime continues to use.

And as for the "rush to war"—are we supposed to believe that Syria (with cities in ruins, some 12 million displaced, and more than a quarter million dead) is at peace as long as the U.S. isn't involved? This is imperial narcissism, the internalized arrogance that sees everything as about the U.S., and renders local contexts (even those as crushingly obvious as the Syrian war) completely invisible.

Far worse is Stein's running mate, Ajamu Baraka, an active enthusiast for Bashar Assad. As the Green Party's Public Intervenor for Human Rights in Stein's Shadow Cabinet, Baraka issued a 2014 statement on his web site hailing Assad's thoroughly controlled pseudo-elections that year which confirmed his inherited dictatorial rule.

Titled, "Elections in Syria: The People Say No to Foreign Intervention," it crowed about Assad's supposed widespread support among the Syrian people, and how the opposition was "fomented" by the "gangster states of NATO."

Perhaps the saddest thing is that even those small sectors of the stateside left that have been serious about solidarity with opposition forces in Syria are themselves divided. On one side are anarchists inspired by the experiment in Rojava. On the other are a handful of organizations, mostly led by Syrian and Arab immigrants and ex-pats, organizing to support the civil resistance movement among Syria's Arab majority. These are loosely allied in the Committee in Solidarity with the People of Syria (CISPOS).

These two currents have grown more suspicious of each other as the situation on the ground in Syria has deteriorated, with fighting breaking out between the Rojava Kurds and elements of the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

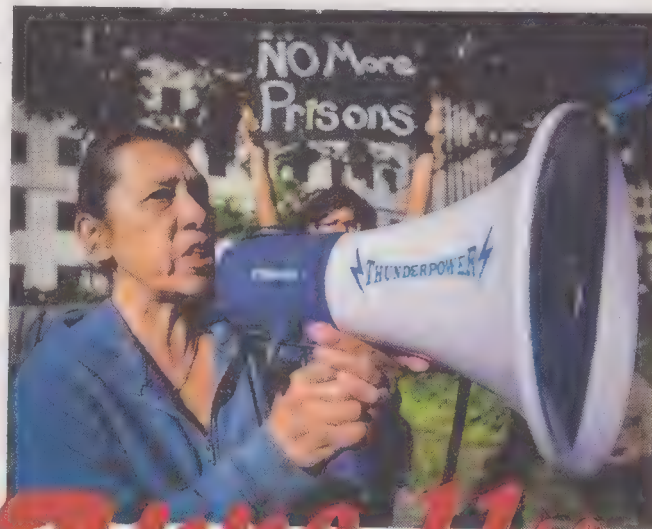
The situation has become much more urgent with the current Turkish intervention in Syria, with U.S. acquiescence. The U.S. has backed the Rojava Kurds as the most effective anti-ISIS force on the ground, but it now appears they are being betrayed in a Great Power deal.

However, the Rojava Kurds are also allied with other more secular and progressive elements of the FSA. Stateside ac-

tivists can play a role in bridging this divide and supporting liberatory change in Syria. Anarchists can start extending solidarity not only to the Rojava Kurds, but also to the Syrian civil opposition generally—to groups such as the Local Coordination Committees, that are still building popular power at the grassroots level despite the war.

And, we can vocally repudiate the self-appointed leaders and mouthpieces of the American left that are flatly, dramatically on the wrong side in Syria.

Bill Weinberg blogs at [CounterVortex.org](http://CounterVortex.org)



## June 11th

### Eco-Resistance, Prisons & the Making of an International Anarchist Day of Solidarity

PANAGIOTIS TSOLKAS

June 11 brought activists and revolutionaries from across the country together with former prisoners and family members of prisoners for a weekend gathering in Washington, D.C. for a "Convergence Against Toxic Prisons."

Around two hundred people participated in two days of networking, strategizing, and listening to black liberation fighters Ramona Africa and Jihad Abdulmumit, and recently-released eco-prisoners Eric McDavid and Daniel McGowan. There was a Monday morning march against the prison system's legacy of building their warehouses of repression on toxic sites across the country.

The weekend focused on organizing around June 11, an international day of solidarity with long-term anarchist and environmental prisoners, with the intention of developing strategic and action-based opposition to the prison system as a whole.

A spirited march went to the Federal Bureau of Prisons

(BOP) Central Office to oppose plans for a new maximum security federal prison on a coal mine site in Kentucky.

Demonstrators chanted, "Burn prisons, not coal" and "Break the locks, no more cops!" About fifty people shut down the intersection in front of the First Street BOP headquarters, blocking entrance to the parking garage.

After holding the space for an hour, and hearing from environmental justice activists and family members of prisoners, the march moved on to the Department of Justice and FBI headquarters. Traffic was snarled for another hour at this central intersection.

June 11 this year marked the start of a new direction for organizing around what has become, over the past decade, a prominent date on the anarchist calendar.

For several years, internal conflict has erupted, primarily between insurrectionist and eco-anarchist tendencies around the framing of the call to action and the level of involvement by current and former prisoners. This year's events showed the potential for addressing and overcoming these challenges by broadening June 11 organizing beyond the anarchist counterculture.

The Prison Ecology Project (PEP), initiated by former-prisoner Paul Wright of *Prison Legal News*, and the Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons (FTP), an offshoot of Earth First! emerged in 2015.

**WHILE MUCH OF THE JUNE 11 ORGANIZING** around anarchists and eco-prisoners has centered on support for individuals charged with ecologically-motivated actions, PEP and FTP have created the potential to expand the connections between ecology, environmental justice, and mass incarceration policies.

As eco and anarchist prisoners have had the misfortune to witness first hand, prisons are built on or around mines, landfills and toxic military bases, with resulting tainted water and polluted air. They are also on the front lines of climate justice, with prisons facing issues of extreme heat and flooding in recent years due to global warming.

These prison/ecology efforts offer guidance for anarchists involved with environmental issues to take a step towards fighting the prison system that puts our comrades in toxic facilities, along with 2.3 million others.

Activism around June 11 opened the door between prisoners and environmentalists enabling the eco-anti-prison movement to go forward. This is similar to the way civil rights organizers of the 1950s and '60s began the movement for prisoners' rights and against prisons, and a broader anti-system analysis, after their civil disobedience led to them being locked up in jails and prisons.

There are numerous examples of anarchist prisoners open-



Mass march in Washington DC to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on June 11 which has become an international anarchist day of solidarity with long-term prisoners. —photos: Jordan Mazurek

**When questions of mass incarceration and climate change are simultaneously becoming mainstream issues, June 11 can take on a central role in the struggle.**

ing this arena to a broader audience by introducing environmental activists to various struggles around prisoners' rights and mass incarceration.

For efforts like those of former Earth Liberation Front (ELF) prisoner Daniel McGowan's fight for the Good Time Bill, which would allow reduced sentences, and exposing the Communications Management Unit (CMU) he was locked up alongside entrapped Muslim prisoners. Or, more recently, animal liberationist Kevin Olliff's support for the fight against book bans and exorbitant phone rates for prisoners. These have been amazing moments of building cross movement relationships.

**AS ANARCHISTS, WE KNOW** that ending mass incarceration is a necessary step of social revolution, just as ending industrialism is a necessary step of ecological liberation. At this time, when questions of mass incarceration and climate change are simultaneously becoming mainstream issues, June 11 can take on a central role in the struggle, etching a new date in the calendar for anarchists to celebrate and our enemies to fear.

Over the past century, anarchists around the world have looked to May First as the primary day when this society is

forced to remember the threat we pose to its order. But the context surrounding struggle against state and capital has shifted significantly over recent decades. The power of organized labor has long been dissipated by globalization, with the remnants largely coopted by the Democratic Party. With these changes, in the U.S. the power of May Day has waned as well.

While many of us continue to celebrate that holiday of resistance in our own ways, and occasionally find ourselves amidst mass movements rallying around the date, as happened in the U.S. during the swelling of the immigrant rights movement in 2006 or the tail end of Occupy in 2012, we should also remain open to how we can develop new terrain and opportunities to conspire together.

June 11 activities have helped to inspire prisoner-led mobilizations this year, such as the September strikes on the anniversary of the Attica uprising. This presents a powerful model of what could lie ahead for anarchist movements and projects in the future.

The words of eco-prisoner Jeff Luer's letter to a crowd gathered in Eugene, Oregon in 2004 for the first June 11 event still ring true today:

"Look around you. The people you see are your hope. They are your community, they are your allies and they are your source of strength.

"You want to be free from the control of multinational corporations that only care about profit? You want to be free from a police force that protects the corrupt? Do you want an alternative to a society and civilization that is destroying its own world? Then take the initiative and create it, build it, and fight for it. If you want change, then take it street by street, community by community, until power has been reclaimed."

Panagioti is an organizer with the Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons, co-founder of the Prison Ecology Project and former editorial collective member of the *Earth First! Journal*. He has experienced the criminal justice system first-hand in over a dozen county jails around the country.

A longer version of this article is available at [FifthEstate.org](http://FifthEstate.org) which includes ■ history of J11.

## Federal Prison Approves Treatment for Transgender Prisoner Marius Mason

### *Long-Awaited Hormone Therapy Begins*

**M**arius Mason has begun hormone treatment for medical gender transition in a Fort Worth, Texas federal prison after a long awaited decision by officials to allow it.

Mason, assigned female at birth, is an anarchist, environmental activist, and former *Fifth Estate* writer.

He was sentenced in 2009 to 22 years imprisonment for the 1999 sabotage of a Monsanto laboratory on the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing, and is currently held in a highly restrictive unit at Carswell Federal Medical Center.

Marius was diagnosed with Gender Identity Dysphoria (GID) in 2013, and came out as trans to friends, family, and supporters the following year. Since then, he has sought gender-affirming health care, including testosterone hormone treatment, or "T," that will cause him to develop male secondary sex characteristics.

It is believed that he is the first trans masculine person to transition after coming into federal custody.

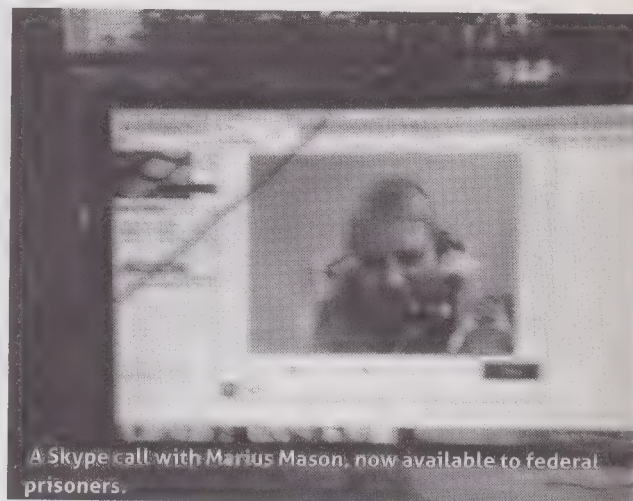
Although he uses masculine pronouns and the name Marius, the states of Texas and Michigan, where he could be said legally to reside, forbid name changes for incarcerated people. Experts in the treatment of trans people, however, insist that respect for a patient's identity, including a gender-appropriate name and pronouns, constitute medically necessary care which prisons are required to provide.

THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS (BOP) has a policy on the care of individuals with GID since at least 2011, but despite Marius's 2013 diagnosis, it was not until an independent expert reviewed Marius's medical records that Carswell administrators agreed to hormone treatment. The facility is now much closer to compliance with federal policy on gender-affirming care, and it is hoped that they will acknowledge the use of gender-affirming names and pronouns as a medical necessity.

The prison requires that correspondence and phone calls utilize his birth name rather than the one consistent with his gender choice.

Estimates of the number of transgender people in the general population is difficult to estimate, both because the U.S. Census does not track this demographic, and because continued discrimination deters many people from identifying as such publicly. As a result of transphobia, transgender people are disproportionately forced out of homes and the workforce, and are as a group over-represented in carceral settings.

Continued on Page 34



## Some Friends of Mine

### BARBARA RUTH

I'd like you to meet some friends of mine  
 lesbians  
 women I write to  
 women in prison.  
 Last year I decided corresponding with them was a good  
     way to continue my political work  
 being too disabled to go to meetings or to demonstrations.

Valerie was the first  
 a Cherokee-Chicana femme doing long time in  
     Nevada prison.  
 An artist without art supplies,  
 she sends me cross-hatch portraits of her sister inmates  
 rendered with ballpoint on lined paper so thin it tears.  
 She has cystic fibrosis  
 at 26 she's getting old  
 for someone with CF.  
 She tries not to think about what that means.  
 After all, she says,  
 no one at the jail thinks she's disabled.  
 Her job includes scrubbing the bathrooms with bleach  
 three times a week.  
 I try to figure a way  
 to smuggle in a charcoal mask.

When I tell my friends who haven't been locked up about  
     my friends who are  
 they first want to know  
 what they are in for.  
 Ruby Jean waits in Florida for a release date.  
 She's been in jail for nineteen years, locked down for two.  
 If you found out her crime was horrible enough  
 would it justify her treatment?

Brenda's another friend in lockdown.  
 She's 22, used to be a songwriter.  
 She's a Black bisexual woman with AIDS.  
 The prison medicates her with Thorazine and Haldol  
 – typical jailhouse medicine.  
 Now Brenda struggles  
 tries to recall the tunes she wrote.  
 (Valerie says no matter  
 how sick she gets  
 she never goes to the infirmary.  
 "Bitches die in there.")  
 Two white prisoners in lockdown with Brenda  
 complain they don't want to take showers after her.  
 Brenda searches for some compassion for them  
 alongside her rage.

Ana Lucia's a Cubana in Texas.  
 Denied visitation of her kids, she went to see them any-  
 way.  
 I'm not sure what all went down, but now she's doing life.  
 At the trial the judge referred to her as "it."  
 No one in the queer community has spoken up for her.

Most prisoners don't get defense committees  
 no matter how political their cases.

Reignbeaux is a Paxantent Two-Spirit  
 disabled so many different ways it's hard to list them all.  
 She joined the Navy and ended up a POW in Southeast Asia.  
 She writes me that the cell she's in now is smaller and worse  
 then the one she escaped from in Hanoi.  
 I'm not sure that I believe everything she writes me  
 but I admire how well she tells the tales.

What are they in for?

Seems like most of the Native dykes in prison got locked  
 up                      for despair  
 and truly, I could make a case that any queer woman in jail  
 is a Prisoner of War.

But not many have a story like Judith's  
 a Jewish revolutionary locked up for conspiracy to bomb a  
     KKK headquarters.  
 Most of the reasons my friends sit in jail are more mundane,  
 combinations of bad luck and bad judgment.

Most have been on the treadmill of institutionalization  
 since                      they were kids  
 group homes, juvie halls, psych wards,  
 county, state, federal jails  
 minimum, maximum security.  
 Control units.  
 Prisoners of one sort or another  
 all their lives.

I write to 25 lesbians in prison.  
 It doesn't feel like work.  
 Or rather  
 it feels like unalienated labor  
 it feels like sisterhood again  
 after all this time  
 and all these disappointments.  
 That's a lot.  
 We hold each other through these words on paper we send  
 our cards and stickers,  
 drawings and articles clipped from newspapers  
 from Washington to Florida  
 and here to me in Oakland.  
 These women I love  
 these friends of mine.

Barbara Ruth writes at the convergence of magic and grit, Po-  
 towatomee and Jewish, fat and yogi, disabled and neurodivergent.

She has performed her original work with Mother Tongue  
 and Wry Crips Disabled Women's Readers' Theaters in the Bay  
 Area, taught in California Poets In the Schools In San Diego, co-  
 conspired with DYKETACTICS! In Philadelphia and blogged at  
 NeuroQueer.

She writes biomythography in poetry and prose, and has been  
 working on a novel since before writing was invented.

She is 70 and lives in San Jose, Calif. and is also a published  
 photographer. She has been an anarchist for 50 years.



# Crime as Struggle Crime as Spectacle

JASON RODGERS

**L**aw is the framework that props up the state, the matrix that nourishes authority. Law is a web of prohibition and mandate. It is one of the mechanisms that ensure that each individual fills an assigned role. It is a particularly complex and abstract system of power.

While there are attempts to use law in constructive ways, such as discourses on rights and liberties, the law is not something that can be used for liberation. It must be rejected and overcome.

Whenever attempts are made to use this mechanism for liberation, oppressive conditions may be somewhat ameliorated in the short term, but law ultimately proves to be a dead

## Any free life will come into conflict with law in some manner.

end, usually strengthening and affirming the dominant system.

Working within the legal system is not even of pragmatic use; instead, it is a massive drain on time and energy. Attempting to use law in such a way creates odd spooks. Rights are a particularly strange concept. Conceptually, rights are treated as if they are some actual (but invisible) aspect of a person, like the religious concept of a soul. Yet they only derive their existence from strong belief, and even then are spectral.

Rights can only be protected legalistically. They are externally granted, often reluctantly following social upheavals, and rely on the good intentions of power. Just as easily as rights are granted, they can similarly be withdrawn.

If law is of no use in liberation, then maybe crime is. Individualist anarchist Max Stirner argued in 1844 that, "Only by crime does he overcome the state's violence when he thinks that the state is not above him, but he is above the state."

**C**RIME IS AN OBVIOUS STARTING POINT in a rejection of law. It is one form of reversal of perspectives. Any free life will come into conflict with law in some manner. Furthermore, because of the complexity of law, everyone is a criminal in one form or another. By embracing the concept of criminality, a person can escape some of these limitations.

Law provides a framework that maintains hegemony. Insurrectionary individuals such as the Italian anarchist, Renzo Novatore, hold that this struggle against society forms the basis for their life project. Novatore wrote, "In 'sin' and 'crime,' the new spring from which the highest synthesis of life gushes." Crime can be a nexus of struggle. It is also a means of breaking through blockages and internalized repression. Freedom is only found in struggle.

Crime might be a necessary starting point for resistance, but there is a risk of turning illegalism into another spook, the criminal into another image transmitted by the spectacle.

As with every challenge and transgression, the illegal can be co-opted. The system can recuperate and become stronger. It is easy to see ways in which illegalism is turned into an aspect of the spectacle. Gangster rap is one of the most obvious ones (that is focused on too often).

The spook version of illegalism is apparent in the romanticization by CrimethInc of traveler kids shoplifting everything and urban guerillas robbing banks. Neither shoplifting nor bank robbery provide a strong enough ends in themselves, though they may be useful means at times.

There is a necessity of something to struggle against, hence, the appeal of the criminal. The danger of the criminal is that it may merely provide the binary support of the law

Continued on Page 44

## FICTION

# How the Revolution Started Bank Guard

MK PUNKY

*H*e's outfitted for combat. Ankle boots; black dungarees; Sam Brown belt with cuffs and mace and other tools of the craft; bullet-proof vest; sunglasses; implacable stare.

And a gun, holstered at the moment.

The nametag says whatever you want it to say.

He's standing in the parking lot, guarding the bank, where inside there must be more money than he will earn in his lifetime.

Sometimes he imagines with a sense of wonderment the origin of all that he protects: Where did it come from? And, then this is the part he always returns to, like a reliable reading spot: What did all those people streaming through the doors that he oversees and protects, how did they get it?

What did they do? What was their trick?

Besides being born here?

He is paid very much more than what he would have been in the place where he came from.

Here he is paid somewhat more than the governmentally decreed mandatory minimum. Which is only right. Guarding other people's money is dangerous work. Putting your life on the line every day for a Bank, a biggie, an important one that, from what he hears, was somehow responsible for the Recession. Well, that could get you killed.

So, \$15.75 per hour (or whatever amount you wish to represent as a fair and decent wage) on most days seems about right. But a thought occurred to the Bank Guard: What would happen?

When he's on duty, he's responsible. No deputies. No backup.

When he has to go to pee, like everyone has to eventually, what would happen? Usually, he positions himself behind the hatchback of his car, parked butt side against a low wall demarcating the Bank's property, over which he is the lone armed protector. He wedges himself between the car and wall and opens the trunk and retrieves a worn paper cup, *grande*



size, a Bank customer once mentioned, and looking, scanning his dominion, still doing his job, the one that pays him the amount that you think is correct, given the known circumstances, he relieves himself into the cup, his hands and gun belt demurely obscured, swivelhead and badge still visible. Still protecting all the money.

When his bladder's empty, he dumps the warm urine, vivid Mountain Dew color this day from dehydration, over the wall, onto the grass.

Then, he returns the cup to its waiting place. He cannot return to work. Because he never left. And, there's pride to be taken or found in that somewhere we can all agree.

But what would happen, the bank guard muses, his penis between thumb and fingers, aimed down like an udder, *What would happen if something happened?*

What would happen if trouble arrived while he was in mid-stream? An incident. Protesters. Robbers. Intruders upon the turf he is paid to defend.

What would happen if he failed to shoot them with his gun?

What if he watched serenely, the foam rising and his cup hand warming, fully awake now and seeing clearly? What if instead of harming, he surveyed the property, zipped himself properly, withstood the dark comedy, behaved unheroically, maybe undemocratically and certainly disreputably

What if he turned away and walked home? Home to his wife's pillowy embrace, to make love with her all afternoon and into the evening.

MK Punky, the author of many books, serves as Poet Laureate of Vista Street Community Library in Los Angeles.

## Bob McGlynn, Visionary of NYC and International Anarchist Scene, Dies at 60

BILL WEINBERG

**B**ob McGlynn, a longtime fighter, organizer and visionary in New York City's anarchist scene, who became known internationally for his solidarity work with activists in the East Bloc, died of a heart attack Aug. 23 at his home in Yonkers. He was 60 years old.

With his long hair, army boots, sleeveless denim jacket and prize-fighter's build, McGlynn could be taken for a biker. But he was motivated by an intense idealism.

Bob's long and varied activist career began in the early 1980s with the Brooklyn Anti-Nuclear Group (BANG), which was organizing to shut down the Indian Point nuclear power plant north of the city. His artistically crude, but politically sophisticated cartoons gave the BANG newsletter a punk aesthetic.

In this same period, he began working as a bicycle messenger, which also thrust him into political activity. Faced with police harassment and city government attempts to oppressively regulate cyclists, in 1982 he organized the first bike messengers union in New York, the Independent Couriers Association.

**I**n 1987, when Mayor Ed Koch issued an order banning bicycles from three Midtown avenues during working hours, the messengers repeatedly rode en masse in defiance.

McGlynn was on the frontlines of this successful struggle—the ban was overturned as unenforceable. Bob McGlynn proudly called himself the “King of All Bicycle Messengers.”

Bob was again facing off with police in the streets when the city attempted to impose a curfew in Tompkins Square



Bob McGlynn at New York City's Lower East Side Tompkins Square Park at a protest rally against a police imposed curfew during the long, hot summer of 1988. Center with headband and beard.

Park in 1988. That set off three years of class war on the gentrifying Lower East Side, with squatters, anarchists, and the homeless fighting the cops in an endless series of angry protests and riots.

But McGlynn's special passion was building ties of solidarity with anti-nuclear, anti-militarist and ecological activists in countries under the Soviet Union's domination; challenging work in the paranoid and polarized atmosphere of the Reagan Cold War era.

In 1983, Bob and several friends formed a New York sister organization to the Moscow Trust Group. The Trust Group, with its unassuming name, was created by Moscow activists as an acceptable cover to advocate for nuclear disarmament. Now linked with a U.S. organization, the Moscow activists had greater visibility, and were less vulnerable to being interned or disappeared by Soviet authorities.

**I**n 1986, in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster, McGlynn and his Trust Group collaborator, Ann-Marie Hendrickson, joined with two activists from the UK to travel to Moscow—smuggling in Russian-language flyers on the dangers of radiation and a banner read-

ing, “No more Hiroshimas, No more Chernobyls—Peace and Environmental Safety for All.”

They scheduled the action for early August, timed for the Hiroshima anniversary. The activists promptly headed to Moscow's Gorky Park where they unfurled their banner and began distributing the leaflets. Bob and the others were quickly arrested by the KGB. After a few days in custody, they were deported, but the action won international media coverage.

**B**ack in New York City after this escapade, McGlynn helped transform the local Trust Group into Neither East Nor West (NENW)—dedicated to supporting anti-authoritarian opposition forces not only in Russia but throughout Eastern Europe.

As the Cold War entered its endgame, such groups were fast gaining ground and NENW organized campaigns and demonstrations to support East Bloc activists faced with imprisonment or persecution—raising their international profile to give them more political space.

NENW gave special emphasis to linking activist struggles in the East

Bloc and the U.S.—for example, getting activists in Moscow, Minsk and Warsaw to protest at their local U.S. embassies to demand freedom for Kenny Toglia, a New York activist facing charges in the Tompkins Square riots.

NENW was always clear on advancing a politics that rejected both superpowers.

During this period, McGlynn saved his money he worked hard for as a bike messenger to travel to Eastern Europe, meeting and networking with activists in Poland and Slovenia (then part of Yugoslavia).

NENW's newsletter was an important networking tool in those pre-Internet days. It was called *On Gogol Boulevard*, for Moscow's artistic and alternative scene hangout, and was mailed to contacts around the world.

It later became an insert that appeared in anarchist publications including *Fifth Estate*, *The Shadow*, *Love &*

*Rage*, and *Profane Existence*.

The Cold War came to an end, but NENW remained active for several more years, especially doing support work for anti-war activists in all the ex-Yugoslavia republics. McGlynn was also involved in support work in this period for persecuted members of Nigeria's anarchist-oriented Awareness League.

Although mostly masked by pseudonyms, McGlynn's persona was an animating force in the 1980s zine scene. With Ann-Marie Hendrickson, he was one of a group known as the Marginals that produced the ultra-irreverent political humor zine, *Shoe Polish Week*. Bob often wrote under the by-line of his nihilist alter-ego, Joey Homicides.

In the late 1990s, McGlynn retreated from Brooklyn to his childhood home of Yonkers and withdrew from the activist scene to deal with health problems. He had long been on pain-killers after throwing out his back as a messenger.

Accustomed to an extremely active lifestyle, accommodating to physical limitations also posed psychological challenges for him.

However, Bob recently emerged from his period of withdrawal. He wrote a brief political memoir of NENW, which appeared in the Spring/Summer 2014 edition of the *Fifth Estate*.

In February 2015, at a NENW reunion party held in Manhattan, McGlynn spoke enthusiastically of reviving the group in light of the war in Ukraine and renewed US-Russia rivalry. The group later that year issued its first public statement in years, in support of Syria's revolutionary Kurds.

Bob McGlynn, who is survived by his longtime partner Joanna Pizzo, will be remembered for his boundless love of freedom, his ruthless single-standard politics, and intransigent hostility to all dictatorships and superpowers.



Bob McGlynn at memorial for legendary anarchist gardener, Adam Purple, La Plaza Cultural community garden, Sept. 2015. —photo: Chris Flash

## The Psychiatric Industrial Complex Another Anti-Authoritarian Put Away

'16 is enough; it's like decades—NOBODY fucks with me.

To collapse the story: on March 10th, '16, I confronted my quack witchdoctor (apologies to actual witchdoctors!) shrink. I'm a depressive who needs to see one for my prescription—that's all. "Dr." M. continued to lie on her reports of me that I acquired. After saying she would rewrite her reports, she repeated again that I needed to go to a hospital, and that my girlfriend and Dr. agreed, after I gave her notes from both saying otherwise. M.'s re-write said I still needed to go to a hospital, and lied saying my Dr. agreed.

I was and am fine—no depression nor anything else.

In confronting Dr. M. I quickly fired her. I thought I was free and went to the bathroom in the building. Suddenly cops were there: "Motherfucking McGlynn (somehow they knew of me!) Get Up!" Me: "Oh Yeah Fuck You!". And so it went with 5 pigs (apologies to actual pigs!).

I found out Dr. M. had dialed 911, lying, saying I threatened her. An ambulance came. I was handcuffed. A torturous day, then night went by, with one thing leading to another. I was taken to White Plains hospital NY. and another "Dr." lied, saying I should be shipped to the wacky joint.

I ended up in St. Vincent's Hospital NY (known in NY State for abuses). Strip searched, pocket belongings taken,

Continued on Page 44

### BOB MCGLYNN

**FE Note:** Bob was working on the article below for us about his psychiatric incarceration. It is unfinished, but is 100% Bob, in its rebellious spirit and its idiosyncratic style.

**M**y Christmas bombing of Hanoi began March 10, 2016. No it wasn't years in a federal pen, but 76 days in "mental" hospitals, 5 stays, and being stuck in harassment and "programs" until at a minimum the end of



## Anarchism in Latin America The Challenge of Abandoning Our Crutches

RAFAEL UZCÁTEGUI

*A*s anarchists struggling against current forms of domination in Latin America, it is important for us to understand the socio-political conditions that have developed in recent years. We also need to reflect on how anarchists have responded to them.

Many Latin American countries went through a so-called progressive decade, beginning in 1999, in which a series of left-wing governments came to power through the electoral process. The governments of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Lula Da Silva in Brazil, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, “Pepe” Mujica in Uruguay, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and Nestor Kirchner in Argentina, constituted a regional bloc of leftist governments.

This coincided with a period of economic prosperity for Latin American economies due to the high price of energy and mineral resources on international markets.

Rafael Uzcátegui is a member of the editorial collective of the anarchist magazine, *El Libertario*, published in Caracas, Venezuela. This excerpt originally appeared on his June 2016 blog in Spanish & translated by FE staff.

### TRANSLATION

—from *El Libertario* [nodo50.org/ellibertario/english.html](http://nodo50.org/ellibertario/english.html)

The left bloc countries were politically differentiated from those countries with neoliberal governments, such as Mexico, Colombia, Chile, and Peru. However, all these governments based their economies on economic development through extractive industries and natural resource exports for global markets.

The high prices provided the leftist regimes with the financial resources to pursue economic redistributive policies to alleviate poverty and thereby strengthened their popularity. Now, falling prices of natural resources on the international markets coincide with crises for leftist governments as revealed by recent electoral reverses. Social tensions have also arisen as the result of their failure to continue fulfilling expectations and promises, as seen in Venezuela, Argentina, and Brazil, and discriminatory policies, along with the criminalization of protests that have generated broad resistance movements in Bolivia and Ecuador.

In addition to these failures, we have witnessed changes in the Cuban economy since the resignation of Fidel Castro, and more are expected. The normalization of relations between the Cuban and U.S. governments will have political, economic, social, and diplomatic consequences, and will deal a harsh symbolic blow to the imaginary revolutionary past of the country.

Uruguayan anarchist Daniel Barret (1952-2009) observed that anarchism as a movement has survived and developed in response to the deteriorating conditions of our time. But, the question is how have we responded to the local historical variables in Latin America? The response, in our opinion, has been embarrassing and underwhelming.

### SEDITIONOUS AWAKENINGS

Barret discussed the current history of anarchist groups and initiatives worldwide, including in Latin America, in *Los sediciosos despertares de la anarquía* [*Seditious Awakenings of Anarchy*], (Libros de Anarres, 2011).

In the chapter “Latin American movements of our times: realities and tasks,” he described the state of anarchist movements between the Rio Grande and Patagonia. He noted that these movements experienced significant growth during recent years, and that very few groups existed before the 1980s.

He also observed a great diversity of groups and tendencies: platformists, anarchopunks, anarcho-syndicalists, insurrectionists, anarcho-indigenists, ecologists, feminists, anti-militarists, and all the other colors of the current anarchist rainbow. None of

Continued on Page 42



# The Spanish Revolution 80 Years On

**BARRY PATEMAN**

**I** belong to the generation of anarchists who grew up in Britain during the 1960s and '70s with the reverberations of the Spanish Revolution, that were still present from 30 years before.

Anarchist exiles from Francoist Spain were living in the UK and Europe and you often met them at anarchist political and social events. They were a constant reminder of the actual realization of anarchy on a large scale as well as an indication to some of us of the contradictions of anarchism when put to the test.

Nearly all the participants in that most wonderful of revolutions have died now. All that is left are the books, pamphlets, and the memories of conversations that have somehow remained as the years have moved on.

The role of anarchists in the events preceding July 1936 in Spain and their response to the attempted military coup by right wing generals became a kind of road map; something to be held up to the light and constantly studied.

As the 20th century crawled to its end, that map gave us confidence that even if we were temporarily lost it would still lead to where we wanted to go if studied enough. There were a myriad of other influences on our construction of anarchism, but Spain was somehow always there, always a reference point we couldn't (and didn't want) to ignore.

Some of us supported the Spanish anarchist resistance that had been taking place since 1939, learning about Sabate, Facerias, Capdevila and all the others who had never given in and continued military resistance against the Franco government inside and outside of Spain. Nothing had died. It might have been seriously ill, but its heart was still beating.

Continued on Next Page



## INTRODUCTION

"History is one more battlefield among the many that exist in the class war. We must learn the lessons of the defeats of the proletariat, because they are the milestones of victory."

—Agustin Guillamon, *Ready for Revolution: The CNT Defense Committees in Barcelona, 1933-1938*

**I**n July 1936 there was a military-fascist rebellion against the Spanish bourgeois Republic. It was immediately met by anarchist-inspired armed resistance of the urban proletariat who, after defeating the military rebels in half of Spain, began the revolutionary process of establishing grassroots self-management in expropriated industry.

At the same time, their counterparts among the peasantry created similar grassroots organs in collectivized agriculture.

This Revolution revealed the possibilities for replacing the horrors of capitalist tyranny with a social order based on individual and collective freedom. It saw the birth of workers' and peasants' councils, creating the opportunity for ordinary people to live with dignity and control their own lives.

But the military rebels were supported by modern German and Italian arms, while the Western democracies, claiming neutrality, refused to aid the Spanish Republic. The anarchists were faced with the conundrum of how to relate to the Republican government, and the intrigues of Communists enabled and supported by the U.S.S.R.

Tragically, the revolution made by the Spanish workers and peasants was crushed, and hundreds of thousands fled in early 1939, seeking refuge in other parts of Europe and eventually all over the world.

A contemporary demonstration in Spain playing off of a punch line from a Monty Python skit.



Continued from Previous Page

Central to our belief was the necessity of a large scale anarchist revolution in order for anarchy to really exist. Just how it would be carried out was always open to debate—and debates there were aplenty because it is what small groups of anarchists did, and still do.

We may have been small in numbers, but the wheel was still in spin and there was a sense of possibility. Of course, that possibility took some heavy knocks. Comrades would come and go. Strikes would be defeated. Working class communities and cultures would be systematically destroyed. Lives of articulate men and women would be smothered and repressed and all the potential in them drained away by a system of unblinking economic and emotional cruelty.

We celebrated each victory in the hope it would lead to better things. One would be dispirited for a while, but then returned because what was the alternative?

**T**HAT ROAD MAP IS ON MY MIND a lot now. Having been used for 47 years or so, it really is worn and cracked. It may well be that for younger comrades it might be of little practical use. Some of them have little time for history. What's happening now is all that matters.

Times have changed so much that those hot July 1936 days in Spain may be interesting, but hardly relevant to the demands and needs of today. As capitalism and all the interpersonal power structures adapt and mutate, anarchism needs to adapt to these changes if they are to be successfully oppose.

Couple that with the determination of some within anarchism to plunder history simply to justify the positions taken now or claim some type of validity by linking ourselves to past people and groups and it seems that the legacy of all those Spanish comrades who brought anarchy alive on such a large scale is either to be dismissed as irrelevant or to be used as ciphers to justify academic ideas or group positions.

New information about Spanish anarchism is constantly being discovered and written about. Like all good history, this knowledge challenges preconceptions and makes it necessary to reassess what was previously understood. We know that the massive anarcho-syndicalist and anarchist organizations, the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo and Federación Anarquista Ibérica (CNT-FAI) were based in working class communities.

Not that communities which thought the same, that enjoyed the same activities, wore the same clothes, necessarily enjoyed being in each other's company all the time.

Like all working class communities there were tensions, resentments and old enmities. Poverty and exploitation and cultural re-enforcement will do that.

The point is that anarchists were part of that community and were seen as belonging. They weren't outsiders telling people what to do and how to think. Their propaganda demonstrates the ability to express quite complex ideas in straightforward ways. Anarchists spoke constantly to people who weren't anarchists rather than just to other anarchists.

Consequently, the CNT-FAI provided a home to many from these communities. Some were anarchists, some were sympathetic to anarchism, seeing anarchists as speaking a lot of sense. Others were there because they saw the anarchists defending jobs, individual freedoms and communities.

Some were there simply because their friends were. Some were there for reasons we may never be clear about. From what we can tell many of them seemed to think that it was possible to destroy Spanish capitalism and somehow create a fairer world that they could share in.

What we do know, thanks to the work of writers such as Chris Ealham, Agustín Guillamón and others, is that the role that the CNT-FAI Defense Committees played in these areas was more important than some of us had realized.

**B**ASED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, the role of the Committees was to help prepare for revolution and when it happened they would have preparations in place to defend it. On a day-to-day basis they helped combat evictions, rent rises, and the high price of goods (a friendly word to a shopkeeper worked wonders!).

They did help support some cooperative food ventures and the ateneus (educational and social centers), but there was not much more of what might now be called pre-figurative activities because they were seen as too much of a threat by the Spanish state. There was, though, conversation and it may be necessary to dig much deeper to see what role the cafes, bars, and living rooms played in the passing on of ideas and sense of possibilities.

We also know that when the military revolted in July 1936 following an electoral victory of the left, millions of people saw the possibility of massive social change because of the immense work the anarchists had put into those urban and rural communities.

They could run their own work—from transport systems to boxing competitions, from iron foundries to net makers.

They could change who they were and re-define what was possible in their lives. The potential in them blossomed and flourished. For many it was a revolution in everyday life and became the high water mark of 20th century revolution. The changes were so exciting and so extreme that I am not sure that people understood quite what was happening.

One wonders if all those writers and volunteers in Spain had the language skills to explain just how profound the economic and personal change was. I am not sure we even understand it fully now.

We can see that once the military uprising took place and people moved onto the streets to resist it, the consensus decision making of the CNT-FAI broke down. Members were here, there, and everywhere—rushing to meet the enemy, taking over factories, dead in the street.

THERE WAS NO TIME LEFT to have discussion upon discussion for the majority of anarchists and all sorts of positions were adopted by those comrades who had the time to make them and were still there. It was the CNT-FAI after all, and if the decisions made by these higher committees were wrong and opposed to everything you saw as anarchist



### Fifth Estate Spanish Revolution Resource Page

See the Fifth Estate website, for a Spanish Revolution Resource page with links to articles describing the events, analyzing the political, economic and social evolution, and the experiences of comrades—our spiritual ancestors—who risked all to bring a new world into being.

There are links to articles from earlier *FE* issues as well as from other sources. All these can stimulate necessary reflection about both the successes and failures of this important period in anarchist history.

[FifthEstate.org/archive/spanish-revolution-resource-page/](http://FifthEstate.org/archive/spanish-revolution-resource-page/)

practice (the militarization of the anarchist fighting columns, anarchists entering the government and so forth), few turned their backs completely on the organization.

Thousands of CNT-FAI members had died because they were members of that organization, and over the years countless numbers had been brutally tortured and damaged because they, too, were *Cenetistas*. Juan García Oliver described the CNT-FAI as a tomb that its members had to respect; you kept faith with your dead and maimed. To turn against the decisions of the organization was to turn against those memories of loss and courage. Where else could you go?

ALL OF THIS MEANT THAT THE YEARS OF DEFEAT were bitter and brutal for the CNT-FAI and we realized that as we worked with and learnt from the exiles and those who began to take the struggle to the Spanish state anew. Even so we still picked up the road map that they had given us and kept it close.

We weren't looking for perfection; we were looking for wholesale change. We still are. Perhaps, we need to consider how to have conversations with those who the CNT connected with so naturally. They consciously appealed to the poor, the outcast, the working class, the unemployed and the imprisoned; to men, women and children who had no political interest at all apart from a sense of disconnection that filled their lives.

I'll pick up the tattered and stuck-together old map, cross off the odd road that's been abandoned and draw in the new ones that have been made.

If we aim for an anarchy that is as rich in potential and as popular as that in Spain and we are welcoming to those who are not exactly like us—whose ideas are not quite as “correct” as ours, we might be on our way to somewhere exciting.

That said, we will go nowhere if we don't have that sense of possibility—so integral to Spanish anarchism—to pass on.

### Works Referred To In The Text

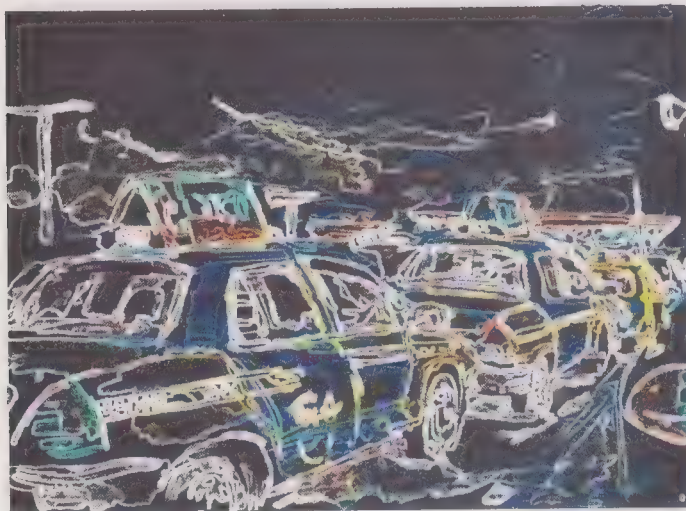
Two influential books from that time were Miguel García, *Franco's Prisoner* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1972) and Antonio Tellez Sola, *Sabate: Guerilla Extraordinary* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1974).

See Chris Ealham, *Anarchists in the City: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Barcelona, 1898-1937* (Oakland: AK Press, 2010) and Agustin Guillamon, *Ready for Revolution: The CNT Defense Committees in Barcelona, 1933-1938* (Oakland: AK Press and Kate Sharpley Library, 2014).

Barry Pateman is a member of the Kate Sharpley Library collective. KateSharpleyLibrary.net Together with Jessica Moran, another collective member, he has recently edited Alexander Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, available through AK Press. AkPress.org.

## Fisherman Out of Water

VICTORIA G. SMITH



His sunglasses blended with his cropped, black hair, his burnished, obsidian skin toasted from hours toiling under salt-sprayed sun when he'd proudly commandeered, he said, not the rusty white cab cutting through Manila's Gordian traffic knot, but a sleek, hand-hewn wooden *banca*,

its bow a knife slicing through the silvery-teal waters off of Masbate Island, taking his place in his age-old clan vocation gathering Neptune's gifts. But no, not anymore, he said—all these, rejoinders to my polite reply to his innocuous question, *how are you, ma'am*, as I slid into

the back seat and mindlessly said, *fine, thank you, and how about you*, as if this was all he'd needed to launch into the oral tradition of his people, singing their story, that if I had known, I would not have invited by that response, *fine, thank you, and how about you*—his answer, a jagged knife to my unsullied ears,

an inconvenient call to action as he told me of how his tribe was driven from their ocean by Chinese fishing boats that rained bullets upon them, chasing them from their heritage into unnavigable streets of the asphalt jungle now slowly drowning them, and this man—this small, dark man grew

before my eyes, transformed into a giant snorting flaming dragon's breath, whose veins, as he sang of his people, flexed, pushed, and throbbed against skin that evolved into scales from burning under a different sun that burned a different heat magnified by city walls, crawled like a tangled ultramarine net

along his arms before ensnaring hands that gripped his new fortune's wheel—he sang his song to me as if I was capable of doing something of consequence for his people, now homeless water gypsies turned concrete vagabonds, fishermen out of water fishing on dry, ruthless shores,

fishing for the two hundred pesos I quickly fished out of my purse to bribe him to stop, *please just stop singing his cursed song*, overpaying him yet relieved as I slid out of the stern of his now metal and rubber vessel, thankfully escaping into the cool, safe oasis of the shopping mall.

These days, I don't greet strangers with *how are you* anymore.

Philippine-born author and poet Victoria G. Smith practiced law in Manila doing pro-bono criminal case advocacy for indigent clients. She began as a law student civilian insurgents during the 1986 Philippine People's Power Revolution that toppled the Marcos dictatorship.

As a U.S. immigrant, she continues her social justice advocacy through her writing. She is the author of the award-winning novella, *Faith Healer*, and the poetry collection, *Warrior Heart, Pilgrim Soul: An Immigrant's Journey*. She writes a poetry column for *ViaTimes*, an immigrant-focused newsmagazine. [VictoriaGSmith.com](http://VictoriaGSmith.com).



Call for Submissions for our Next Issue

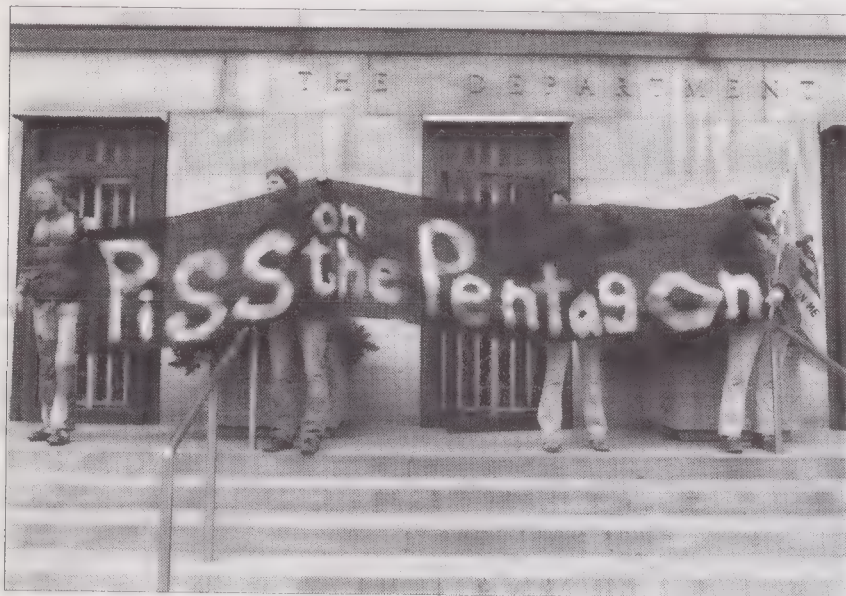
### Riots, Rebellions, Revolts & Revolutions

2017 is the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution & its betrayal by the Bolsheviks & the 50th anniversary of the Detroit Rebellion, but articles can reflect micro-aspects of these concepts as well. A story of personal revolt, a neighborhood rebellion, a high school riot, etc. Essays, fiction, poetry, and graphics are welcome.

Send proposals to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org).

Submission deadline: January 8; Publication date: February 8

See our web site for submission guidelines: [FifthEstate.org](http://FifthEstate.org)



Edward Hasbrouck, who wrote this article with others, along the march route of the Mobilization Against the Draft (estimated at 30,000 people), Washington, DC, March 22, 1980.

Photo by Craig Glassner

## No Draft \* No Registration \* No War A New Right for Women: Eligible for the U.S. War Machine

EDWARD HASBROUCK

**Y**oung women may soon face the same choice at age 18 that men have faced since 1980: whether to register with the Selective Service System for possible military conscription.

Now that the military allows women in all combat roles, military policy can no longer be used as an excuse for requiring men but not women to register for the draft. If Congress does nothing, courts are likely to rule that the current men-only draft registration scheme is unconstitutional. As a result, Congress will soon have to choose whether to extend draft registration to women, end it entirely, or reverse the policy change opening combat assignments to women.

Reformers among many oppressed groups, most recently women and LGBT people, often advocate military service to the state as a way to obtain equality. However, radicals among these groups seek freedom from the state and do not want to fight for it nor for its interests.

One radical queer collective encapsulated the argument in the title of a recent anthology: *Against Equality: Don't Ask Us to Fight Their Wars*.

WHEN THE MINIMUM VOTING AGE WAS 21 and the U.S. was fighting a war in Southeast Asia, the government was confronted by the youth movement with the critique, "If we are old enough to be forced to fight, we are old enough to vote."

In response, the government amended the Constitution in 1971 to lower the voting age to 18. But voting rights did nothing to stop the draft or the war. The government continued drafting teenagers, knowing they were outnumbered and

outvoted by people too old too be at risk of being drafted.

During World War II, the U.S. tried to draft Japanese-American men while they and their families were interned in concentration camps. Mainstream Japanese-American organizations encouraged internees to enlist as a way to prove their loyalty to the U.S.

But there was widespread resistance within the camps, leading to the largest mass trials of draft resisters in U.S. history. In the years since, Japanese-American draft resisters who once were ostracized, have come to be recognized as community heroes.

**I**S REGISTERING TO FIGHT for the empire the path to women's liberation? There's been a longstanding split between liberal advocates for gender equality through war making, and radical feminists who have opposed war and the draft as sexist.

When President Jimmy Carter announced his proposal to reinstate draft registration in 1980, some of the strongest opposition came from women.

Carter's rationale for bringing back draft registration was to prepare for U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in support of the mujahedeen fighters who were U.S. surrogates battling Soviet troops.

I spent 4 1/2 months in a federal prison camp in 1983-1984 for refusing to agree to fight on the side of what became the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

The government tried to scare young men into registering by prosecuting a handful of vocal nonregistrants in the early 1980s. Because the government had to prove that each defendant knew he was supposed to register, only those who spoke out publicly could be prosecuted.

An open letter I wrote to the government, and published in a 1982 *Fifth Estate*, was an essential part of the evidence against

The reason we only have registration, and not a draft, is that registration has failed to overcome massive noncompliance, sustained spontaneously over decades.

me in court. These show trials backfired. They called attention to the resistance and made clear that there was safety in numbers and in staying closeted.

Enforcement of draft registration was suspended in 1988, and never resumed.

Young men today have to register if they want to qualify for student aid and other government programs, but there's no attempt to verify the addresses they provide. Men are supposed to notify the Selective Service System every time they change their residence until their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday, but almost nobody does. The only audit of Selective Service, in 1982, found that 20 to 40 percent of the addresses on file already were outdated. Today, most induction notices would end up in the dead-letter office.

**W**ILL YOUNG WOMEN BE MORE WILLING to register for the draft than young men have been? Women have the same reasons as men to oppose draft registration, and will undoubtedly have reasons of their own. A petition against registration of women or men, started earlier this year by a draft-age woman, Julie Mastrine, got more than 10,000 signatures in its first week.

Some people think that none of this matters because, "It's only registration." But the *raison d'être* of draft registration – in addition to inculcating the idea that we each owe the government a debt of service – is to enable a draft.

And, the reason we only have registration, and not a draft, is that registration has failed to overcome massive noncompliance, sustained spontaneously over decades, that has rendered registration unenforceable and the registration database useless.

The success of draft resistance in preventing a draft is one of the most important popular victories of the dark days of the Reagan era and after. But because the resistance has been largely passive and closeted, its success and its implications for military policy (the draft is not a realistic policy option, regardless of whether the President, the Pentagon, and/or Congress want it if they run out of enlistees, mercenaries, contractors, etc. to fight their wars) have been little noticed.

As James C. Scott observes in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, "Quiet, anonymous. . .lawbreaking and disobedience may well be the historically preferred mode of political action for. . .subaltern classes, for whom open defiance is too dangerous."

Governments don't do well at acknowledging that their power is limited by the willingness of the people to carry out their orders. It seems likely that another wave of resistance, or at least visible evidence of the inevitability of resistance to any

attempt to expand draft registration to women, will be necessary before the government will admit that draft registration has failed, and end it entirely.

The decision of whether there will be a draft, or whether military conscription will be removed from the U.S. arsenal, is being and will be made by the people who are ordered to register for the draft or submit to induction, not by politicians.

Anti-draft strategy should focus on encouraging, empowering, and supporting resistance by young women, young men, and their allies that will make a draft impossible or unworkable, not on trying to persuade politicians.

Edward Hasbrouck is an anarchist, pacifist, and ally of youth liberation. He maintains a Web site about the draft, draft registration, and draft resistance at [Resisters.info](http://Resisters.info). His site is [Hasbrouck.org](http://Hasbrouck.org)

The U.S. Attorney who supervised his prosecution, William Weld, was 2016 Libertarian Party vice-presidential candidate.

## Excerpt —from *The Garden of Peculiarities* Deterritorializing the Nation

JESÚS SEPÚLVEDA

**I**n order to deterritorialize the state it is imperative to oppose militarism and its ideological base, the idea of the nation state. If it were possible to suppress the imaginary of the imagined community, those which exist in the diverse nation-building projects, community would become a real group of people with faces and identifiable names.

Its daily interaction would be on a human scale, and the community would truly exist. In this way, the state would be deterritorialized.

The idea of the nation state is linked to the idea of race: the foundation of xenophobia and racism. The state has never stopped being a classist and racist instrument of control and oppression.

Its territorialization occurs through the movement and deployment of armed forces. In order to dissolve the state, it is necessary to dismantle militarism and the arms industry. The state operates as if it were a great national warehouse that invests in warlike exercises: wars.

With the dissolution of the state, the nation is deterritorialized, and borders lose their reality, becoming what they really are: artificial limits constructed by the high priests of all kinds of nationalisms and regionalisms. These limits are the political bonds imposed by the state on its subjects.

Nationalism continues to subjugate people through the sedentary practices derived as much through urban control as through the territorial economy of agriculture. The effect of these practices is domiciliation,\* which attaches itself to the

domesticating action of the state.

Notwithstanding, when the apparatus that promotes the concept of national territory dissolves, one of the mechanisms of standardization also stops functioning. To move freely from one zone to another—from community to community—without being subject to customs or police controls, brings with it a freedom that is embodied in daily practice.

Constant movement is an uncontrollable force. Its libertarian character is found in its capacity to abolish sedentarianism and domiciliation, destroying all state control. To displace oneself is to undomesticate oneself. Going from one place to another, meeting people, learning their languages and understanding different visions of the world is a liberating

praxis. This praxis sharpens peculiarity.

Fascism is fomented by nationalism: a feeling of national property exacerbated by the possessing and monied classes. This feeling is transferred to the dispossessed and poor of the cities through the mechanisms of civic, official and national propaganda and indoctrination. Some people, for example, repeat discourses that are spread by ideology in the first person plural.

The verb is conjugated as “we,” promoting an idiomatic control and reinforcing identifications between country, flag, government and people. To say “we have a park, a mountain range, a good sports team, or a stable economy,” implies a kind of linguistic acceptance of an imposed and/or assigned

## Q&A

### Draft Card Burning to Stop Vietnam War



Burning draft cards in NYC, 1967

Bruce Dancis' book, *Resister: A Story of Protest and Prison* (Cornell Press, 2014) chronicles his efforts during the Vietnam War to defy the draft and cripple the U.S. war effort.

**Fifth Estate:** You tore up your draft card and then led a mass burning of them in 1967.

**Bruce Dancis:** Very few people wanted to fight in the Vietnam War, even those who supported it. There were 27 million draft age men and 25 million didn't go into the army.

I decided my student deferment was unfair. Poor kids couldn't get them and were subject to induction into the army. We needed resistance to the war, so I tore up my draft card.

They were paper back then. In 1965, Congress passed a law making it illegal, punishable by five years in prison, to

mutilate or destroy your draft card.

The draft card became the symbol of oppression for young men and the women who supported them in the mid- and late-1960s.

**FE:** Why did you wind up going to prison?

**BD:** I was prosecuted for tearing up my draft card. I was one of the first people to do that and was singled out. And, I was organizing other men to burn their cards. I was convicted and served 19 and a half months in federal prison.

**FE:** Very few people of those who violated the draft law were prosecuted.

**BD:** That was a smart strategy by the government. Our goal was to keep having more and more men tearing up and burning their draft cards, turning them in, refusing induction. We hoped we would flood the courts, fill the jails, make it hard to get enough men to fight the war.

The prosecution was smart. They picked off ringleaders like me. The U.S. Attorney General at the time, Ramsey Clark, said the government would have been crazy to go after everybody. Ninety percent of those who committed some punishable act under the federal draft statute were never prosecuted.

**FE:** In April 1967, you led a mass draft card burning in New York City.

**BD:** We had about 185 men who burned their draft cards at the time of the Spring Mobilization, a large demonstration against the war. This is where Dr. Martin Luther King spoke, one of his first major addresses against the war.

**FE:** How did you fare in prison? Draft card burners were reviled in the media.

**BD:** Most of the guys in prison were there for crimes like inter-state car theft and were incredulous that I was there for tearing up a piece of paper.

collective national identity. This is the royal *we*, adapted to modern times to make the people think that the government and its financial institutions represent the common individual.

People speak of the actions of the government as if they have had some participation in governmental decisions or in the use of military repression. This is the nationalist alienation that facilitates the appearance of fascism.

Indoctrination is reproduced through schools, sports, traditional values, rules, official narratives and other means of control. Propaganda is brought to life through luminous screens (television, movies, information technology, etc.), the press, radio, education, etc. Fascism is crystallized through the notion of nation.

Because of this, all assigned and/or imposed notions of community identity tend to reinforce these notions: nationality, regionalism, language, social role, professional relationships, religious beliefs, familial clans, brotherhoods and orders, work relationships, job or profession, etc.

Real community does not walk the path of these applied identities. Real community has to do with camaraderie and friendship.

And, it isn't difficult to imagine. Those who constitute it are those family and friends we see daily and with whom we prefer to relate and enjoy every day.

There, everyday solidarity is experienced and the presence of the state is negated. There, mutual recognition and true respect exist. There also, borders are deterritorialized, and the torpid banners of xenophobia are bravely repelled.

\* The word domiciliation comes from *domicile*—from Latin *domicilium*, a combination of *domus* (house) + *cola* (dweller).

So, domiciliation is a political mechanism used by the state to make people stay at home and not occupy public spaces. Under repressive regimes, this political practice is carried out by curfew and states of exceptions (state of siege, emergency, and war).

In representative democracies, fear, propaganda and electronic devices (TV, computers, video games, etc.) are used to reinforce the privacy of dwellings, in which everyone is treated as a recluse.

Jesús Sepúlveda teaches at the University of Oregon in Eugene. He is the author of eight collections of poetry and three books of essays, including his green-anarchist manifesto, *The Garden of Peculiarities*, and his book on Latin America poetry *Poets on the Edge*.

# What Makes a Social Movement? Rebel Friendships

ERIC LAURSEN

**S**ocial movements, not establishment reformers, have nurtured and propelled the most important liberatory struggles of the last half-century, from the Civil Rights and Gay Rights struggles to the Feminist Movement to Native American nations recent uprisings against fracking and pipelines.

Social movements create collective engagement, pockets of resistance that “reframe a politics of everyday life,” as activist and academic Ben Shepard writes in his recent book, *Rebel Friendships: “Outsider” Networks and Social Movements* (2015, Palgrave Macmillan), even as they gather support and ignite overwhelming demands for change.

These movements aren't organized from the top down; sometimes they aren't organized at all initially, because they grow out of networks of friends, neighbors, co-workers, victims, lovers, and ex-lovers. Sometimes they happen almost by accident, like the angry, passionate gay rights movement that emerged from Stonewall in 1969—but the people who made that movement knew each other, or at least recognized one another as a face at the other end of a bar.

**T**HESE FRIENDSHIPS ARE THE ESSENCE of any society based on autonomy and self-organizing. Democracy—the kind anarchists Pyotr Kropotkin or Emma Goldman imagined, not the brand that passes for liberal or social democracy in the hands of a Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders—starts with individuals, communities, and the relationships and affinities that bring them together.

That's why Goldman refused to separate personal and sexual liberation from the larger political struggle for peace, self-expression, and workers' rights. Democracy had to involve something more than the freedom to sell one's labor and vote a new set of masters into office every few years. It had to be powered by a radical intimacy that razed class, racial, and gender barriers and widened the boundaries of the democratic decisions we can now make into something unlimited.

Political organizing isn't truly transformational unless it grows from radical friendships or helps to create them.

“A general outbreak of public resistance to militarism would contribute more to the removal of sexual imbalance than any action through the channels we have come to regard as political,” poet, biologist, and anarchist Alex Comfort suggested in 1949, as he was helping to launch the Ban the Bomb movement in the UK. Ban the Bomb would help birth a radical political culture in Britain in the 1960s and Comfort would go on to write *The Joy of Sex* in 1972, the first fully-illustrated, sex-positive, how-to guide to be carried in mainstream bookstores.

There are countless other examples. The farm workers' movement of the same and succeeding decades grew out of the tight relationships, based on family, community, and technical knowledge that generations of grape har-

Occupy Wall Street, Zuccotti Park, New York City, September 2011



Organizers in a range of social movements trace their activism to periods in their lives that took them out of themselves, sexually as well as politically

vesters developed in the American Southwest—quasi-communal and quite unlike the middle-class white communities that ignored and exploited them.

Radicalism repeatedly flourishes on college campuses, despite their role in cementing new generations of a ruling elite, because so many students, removed from the roles they accepted at home, begin to see the possibility of new kinds of relationships and communities.

Organizers in a range of social movements, from Black Lives Matter to the Occupy movement to the anti-WTO movement of a decade ago, can trace their activism to periods in their lives that took them out of themselves, sexually as well as politically.

**B**EHIND, OR AT THE CORE OF, each of these movements were friendships, between individuals and among small circles that widened out in various degrees of commitment. Shepard's book revisits the stories of some of the remarkable individuals who were the catalysts of these immensely significant communities of choice.

Eric Rofes, historian and one of the most important gay organizers in the post-Stonewall decades, was also a master networker whose work building a gay men's health movement pulled in and energized countless younger activists. "Rofes's favored the notion of 'families of choice' as a method to create relationships that transcended the work of organizations or projects," Shepard writes.

There was New Yorker Bob Kohler, a veteran of both the Civil Rights Movement and Stonewall and a founder of the Gay Liberation Front and, later, the SexPanic! in the late 1990s. Kohler in turn was a mentor to Sylvia Rivera, who spent much of her life homeless, alcoholic, on drugs, or a combination of the three, but who was instrumental in pulling together a militant transgender movement in New York, decades before anyone had heard of Bruce/Caitlyn Jenner, through her legions of friends and acquaintances on the streets of the city.

More remarkable individuals and relationships burst out of the story of Time's Up!, the collective in which "friends clashed, fought, danced, and pushed the lines between public and private space within a burlesque of do-it-yourself street activism," as Shepard describes the group that organized New York's legendary bike rides.

Many Time's Up! activists helped import the nonhierar-

chical process of the group into the Occupy movement in 2011.

It's not always a pretty story. Feuds between friends whose relationships are pivotal to social movements have destroyed them, or nearly so. Kohler and Rivera's stormy friendship alone provides important lessons in how personal relationships can both galvanize and demoralize the people they inspire. Police understand well how social movements operate and are practiced at infiltrating and creating rifts between activists.

All the more reason why telling the story of these movements can be nearly as important as living them. Almost by definition, social movements generally don't keep phone logs, ledgers, or meeting notes or provide articles of incorporation. Much of the history that's passed on is oral. But the more we know, the better able we are to see trouble on the horizon, and respond.

**J**UST AS IMPORTANTLY, reclaiming these histories reawakens the radical impulses that lead to specific instances of change in society and helps us to see past the compromised, ever-narrower, self-serving and self-perpetuating organizations that the remnants of social movements so often congeal into when the movement begins to disintegrate.

Groups like ACT UP and Occupy deliberately set themselves up as networks of autonomous individuals and affinity groups, with a minimum of the professional infrastructure, financial hierarchy, and focus on self-perpetuation that's typical of the Nonprofit Industrial Complex.

They coalesce and then—but not always—disintegrate or burn out as the moment dictates, leaving room for other groups to rise up and take the struggle to the next stage. Often, their legacy is much more powerful than that of better-known, more careerist organizations: the latter can bring about reform, but social movements can engender new ways of being.

There's a pathos to the stories of social movements that mirrors human beings' struggles against isolation, often transitory attachments and attitudes, and the fleeting nature of life itself. "Loss is part of modern living," Shepard writes. "Many find themselves isolated from communities, sitting and looking at computers, and isolated from their own labor. Friends come and disappear; modern living is an ongoing loss exercise. Struggling against isolation, movements build cultures of their own. Here the intersection of friendship, harm reduction, and support make participation in social movements feel authentic. New ideas and innovations take shape through this mix of bodies, actions, and ideas."

Social movements are sometimes caricatured as cliques and subcultures. And while subcultures can sometimes be exclusionary and inward-looking, they can also save the lives of the many isolated individuals who find refuge in them. Accounts of funerals and end-of-life support groups punctuate *Rebel Friendships*, underscoring the enduring nature of the personal ties between veterans of social movements and also the strong organizing impact of the AIDS epidemic.

On the brighter side, sometimes friendships are more than just that. Sex can play a role in organizing as well. "Sex and friendship were not opposed or linked," Shepard writes, echoing Foucault; "the ties between the two fostered communities of care and pleasure."

Shepard devotes a great deal of space in his book to the rise of LGBTQ activism and the social movements that grew out of it, in part because he participated himself, but also, argu-

ably, because they play a critical role in the development of all social movements of the past 40 years, at least in the U.S.

Community, in the queer world, is almost by necessity intentional—much more so than in conventional heterosexual society. Friendships, physical and otherwise, are vital to the community's existence, and so a great many object lessons and examples of how to organize social movements can be gleaned from the decades of politically aware LGBTQ life—lessons in civility, respect, mutual support and care, and the importance of solidarity with other struggles against other oppressions.

Shepard makes a strong case that a fairly direct line runs from Stonewall to Time's Up! and Reclaim the Streets, to the campaigns against corporate globalization and the Occupy movement, among many others. Urban movements of resistance that organize in the face of a power structure insistent on not just ignoring them but negating their existence, they popped up often unexpectedly, never in exactly the same place twice, in a kind of ongoing guerrilla war against injustice and their own oppression and marginalization.

Like all social movements, they drew strength from an implicit utopianism and the promise of personal as well as political liberation. The marrow of much of their history—and their future—is the role played by the individuals, couples, and knots of friends and lovers who help to catalyze them.

Eric Laursen is a writer and activist living in Massachusetts. His most recent book is *The People's Pension: The Struggle to Defend Social Security Since Reagan* (AK Press, 2012).

## Update on Marius Mason

Continued from Page 18

Other good news for Marius is that Skype calls are now available to Carswell prisoners and he is able to see his children and friends and be given virtual tours of their surroundings.

Plus, the BOP announced that the 102 U.S. federal prisons will offer vegan meals. Often Marius's diet consisted of peanut butter and crackers from the commissary due to a lack of plant-based options. This change is a direct result of inmates and their advocates demanding that the BOP offer vegan food. However, Marius says he has yet to see the results of this and actually the food service has gotten worse.

Marius has applied to Ohio University Correctional Education, one of only a small number of colleges that offer full correspondence (rather than on-line) courses.

The coursework costs \$343 per credit

hour (each class is 3-4 credits), plus an application fee and books, totaling an estimated \$1200-\$1300 for the first course in psychology. Donations are needed and can be made through his web site.

The Draconian sentence Marius received and the isolation from family, friends, and comrades is alleviated greatly by letters.

Anyone can write him, but he can only reply to a restricted list. Address letters thusly:

Marie (Marius) Mason #04672-061  
FMC Carswell  
P.O. Box 27137  
Fort Worth, TX 76127

For more information about Marius, see [SupportMarieMason.org](http://SupportMarieMason.org) where you can sign up for regular updates and see Marius's poetry and art work.

For more information about transgender people in prisons, visit the site [BlackandPink.org](http://BlackandPink.org).

## Books Received

*Anarchy in a Cold War*, Kurtis Sunday. Novel set in the West Berlin alternative-squatter-Punk scene during the Cold War. Cambria Books. [cambriabooks.co.uk](http://cambriabooks.co.uk)

*Understanding Jim Crow: Using Racist Memorabilia to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice*, David Pilgrim. PMpress.org. Introduces readers to the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, in Big Rapids, Mich., a collection of more than ten thousand contemptible collectibles used to engage visitors in discussions about racism.

*Blessed is the Flame: an introduction to concentration resistance and anarcho-nihilism*. Serafini. Pistols Drawn. [thetower.ca/imprint](http://thetower.ca/imprint).

## Review

# Sam Dolgoff

## A life at the center of American anarchism for seventy years

**Left of the Left: My Memories of Sam Dolgoff**  
Anatole Dolgoff; Introduction by Andrew Cornell  
AK Press, 2016, 391 pp., \$22.

JOHN CLARK

Anatole Dolgoff is a great story-teller. He does the kind of writing that is rare on the left. It never seems to occur to most political writers that entertaining people is not a bad thing. It occurs all the time to Anatole.

In this fascinating combination of biography and people's history he manages not only to inspire but to entertain. He has a deep appreciation of all the humor and irony, along with the joys and sorrows, of real life.

This wide-ranging narrative testifies to the author's love of his father, his mother and his family. In addition, his deep affection for people, from the quite ordinary to the sometimes very extraordinary, comes through powerfully. There is a lot of suffering, pain and even tragedy in this story, but what wins out ultimately is humanity and compassion, humor and inspiration.

During his lifetime, I knew Sam Dolgoff (1902-1990) through his important books, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, *The Anarchist Collectives* and *The Cuban Revolution: A Critical Perspective*, all of which I recommend highly for their insights into three crucial periods in anarchist history, and also through his role as a major figure in the IWW and the anarchist labor movement.

**HIS SON DESCRIBES SAM** as "a house painter, a loving husband and father, a militant labor organizer, a powerful orator, and a self-taught public intellectual." He says that throughout his life Sam "stuck to his bedrock beliefs that humans were capable of cooperating with one another, managing their own affairs, and sharing earth's wealth equitably."

Notice that Sam's beliefs are not primarily political doctrines or sectarian dogmas, but rather expressions of a basic faith in people, their capacities, and their fundamental goodness.



Esther and Sam Dolgoff, 1930s. Image copied in the 1970s by a current FE staffer

Sam Dolgoff is at the center of this book, but it's also a book about Sam's World and all the people who populated it. Anatole says that Spanish anarchist militia leader Durutti's famous dictum, "We carry a new world here, in our hearts," was "the essence of Sam Dolgoff." The book helps reveal that new world to us by showing how many have lived it, in the here and now, in their own lives.

This book is also a history of the 20th century anarchist movement, the immigrant and especially Jewish anarchist movement, the IWW, and the radical labor movement. Those of us who have been members and supporters of the IWW will appreciate the central place it has in this story.

**ANATOLE REMEMBERS** the "joy he felt as a small boy" when his father announced, "it was time to visit the Five-ten hall." This was one of the few remaining IWW union halls, where he met many old Wobblies and heard stories of radical labor history first-hand.

He puts a very human and personal face on this history and shows how the union was not only a labor organization, but a strong community of mutual aid and loyalty between comrades. He sketches a vivid portrait of life among the Wobblies, from dedicated activists and self-sacrificing revolutionaries to assorted jokers and characters. Along the way, we learn much about the concrete meaning of solidarity.

It is an important work for its contribution to helping correct the lack of attention in anarchist studies to the reality of the distinctive spirit of the era and milieu. It reminds me in



Free from the British colonialism in Ghana, new cops rule.

### Dolgov on National Liberation

Sam Dolgov quoted in *Left of the Left* on the establishment of Ghana in 1958 as an independent state which the left celebrated as "progressive."

Behold! A new state is being built! The power of foreign colonial rulers is now wielded by the new government. The new government makes and enforces the law of the land. It crates the machinery of domination. It organizes the army, police, jails, judge, courts, schools, radio stations. . . .

To the native governing class, independence meant the right to abolish the natural, social, cultural and communal institutions that were developed by the people, and impose from above, by force, an artificial scheme of life, which nullifies or distorts their natural development and paralyzes their creative capacities.

The new rulers secretly admired the colonial government and administrators. They envied the easy, luxurious life of their masters, their power, their prestige. . . . They soaked up the teachings of their master like a sponge absorbs water.

some ways of Tom Goyens' *Beer and Revolution*, a scholarly work, but also one that is unusually concrete in recounting the details of the everyday life of the German immigrant anarchist community of New York City.

Goyens depicts a popular culture in which neighborhood life, beer parlors, picnics in the country, bands and orchestras, in short, sociability was so important. Anatole's book is also rooted in this way in everyday life. It helps us understand why more readers have been drawn to anarchism through the pages of Emma Goldman's novelesque autobiography, *Living My Life*, than by thousands of manifestos and treatises that are certainly full of excellent ideas, but are often lacking in the "life" part of it. *Left of the Left* carries on this tradition of

presenting anarchism as a form of life, a way of *living*.

Readers who have been drawn to anarchism through the counterculture, through Punk music, through radical ecology, through ecofeminism, or through the global justice movement, will get something very important from this book. It will show them that their own movements are related to a long and very rich history of struggle and organization that has largely been forgotten over the past generation or two.

It offers something that few contemporary readers, whatever their anarchist or radical sympathies may be, will have experienced: what it was like to grow up in an anarchist family, an anarchist community and an anarchist culture.

Anatole recounts quite a few feuds and arguments among the anarchists themselves and within the larger left. He finds that Sam was often, in fact most of the time, correct, but he doesn't mind admitting there were also a good number of cases in which Sam's judgment was a bit off.

Though Sam was not one to hold grudges, he could be rigid in his thinking at times, while Anatole is much more willing to give people slack and consider the validity of different ways of looking at things, even on highly contentious topics such as the collaboration with the state by some Spanish anarchists during the Civil War and social revolution.

He doesn't avoid ideological issues, but he discusses them within a larger narrative that includes rich historical and personal detail. There are long sections on such important figures as the prominent Russian anarchist, G.P. Maximoff, the legendary Italian-American anarchist leader, Carlo Tresca, the African-American IWW hero, Ben Fletcher, and the revered Communist-turned anarchist Spanish Civil War veteran, Russell Blackwell.

The sections on Maximoff show the kind of important details that can be learned from this book. Maximoff was Sam's mentor, and he admired him greatly, both as a movement figure and as a theorist. His book, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism*, is one of the best-known works on Bakunin's ideas. Yet, Anatole shows how Sam, despite his high regard for Maximoff, pinned down the problem with his version of Bakunin.

Maximoff's method of plugging short quotations into a systematized framework abandoned any "sense of context and history" and "put Bakunin in a straightjacket." He artificially molded Bakunin's often impressionistic and completely unsystematic thought into a "scientific anarchism," while, as Sam put it bluntly, "there is no such thing."

I'll end by simply recommending that you get the book and read it cover to cover. You never know when some amusing incident or fascinating biographical detail will be followed by a revealing glimpse of working class life, or an illuminating insight into anarchist or syndicalist politics.

John Clark is a writer, educator, and communitarian anarchist activist in New Orleans, where his family has been for twelve generations. His most recent book is *The Tragedy of Common Sense* available from [ChangingSunsPress.org](http://ChangingSunsPress.org).

## INTRODUCTION

As we explore routes out of today's stifling, mechanized, crisis-bound world the FE staff opens the magazine's pages to many forms of subversive research and many flavors of anarchic revolt.

The Chicago Surrealist group Penelope Rosemont discusses below was inspired by the Surrealist movement that began in Europe in the 1920s. Surrealism is a conscious project for utilizing the discoveries of Freudian psychology to subvert the ruling order by images and words, elaborating forms through which people can express and gratify their repressed desires and challenge societal oppression.

Over the years, various Surrealists have developed complex cultural and political relationships with anarchist as well as with socialist and communist ideas and groups, while some well-known Surrealists, such as Salvador Dali, became adepts of the capitalist marketplace.

The Chicago Surrealist group wanted not only to ridicule the existing order, but also to change it. With this in mind, they joined their cultural critique with the direct action traditions, analyses and methods of the revolutionary workers' movement embodied in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

## PENELOPE ROSEMONT

**U**rban Uprisings, Youth Revolt, 1966. Cities were being torn up and burned. For us, this chaos showed the flame of revolt had not been extinguished; the passion for freedom not forgotten. People chose once again to step onto the stage of history.

We wanted to be part of it, and we were. The first leaflet issued by the Chicago Surrealist Group was passed out at a civil rights rally in Chicago, July 10, 1966, following a week of rioting a month earlier.

The main speaker was Martin Luther King, Jr. Inspired and impatient, our tract demanded not only civil rights, but "deliriously and simply Total Liberation!"



**Why Surrealism?**  
**"Deliriously & Simply**  
**Total Liberation!"**

*Exercise in Dada Motion*, Chicago Surrealist Group, *Exquisite Corpse*, group piece, 2001

The leaflet celebrated the Negroes (as blacks were generally called at the time) of Watts, the Puerto Ricans of Chicago, the Provos of Amsterdam (counter-cultural, anarchist-inspired activists), the Zengakuren of Japan (All-Japan League of Student Self-Government, organizers of massive demonstrations, including dramatic confrontations with police), the Nat Turner slave insurrection of 1831, wildcat strikers, deserters, and youth.

All those who knew "the struggle for freedom cannot be guided by the rulebooks of priests and politicians."

**L**IBERATED SOULS, we wrote, "have an historical role as cosmic architects armed with hammers, electric guitars, and apocalyptic visions, but more significantly, armed with the exhilarating knowledge that we are able to... build a new everything."

We modestly signed it, The Surrealist Group, The Anarchist Horde, and The Rebel Worker group. Mostly college drop-outs and draft resisters and IWW members, we began the Solidarity Bookshop on Armitage Avenue in 1964, and published a magazine, *Rebel Worker*.

It was a hangout for all sorts of dissidents who came to buy books, magazines (ranging from *Fifth Estate* to *Internationale Situationniste*), and to plan an alternative future. We wanted the place to be a center for a growing movement—and it was.

It was also harassed, so we moved a lot. The bookshop's main participants were me, Bernard Marszalek, Robert Green, Tor Fagre, Franklin Rosemont, and Simone Collier and Joan Smith, who worked with Bernard at Chicago's main post office. (Their front group was the PO Chess Club.) Soon, we were joined by Paul Garon from Louisville, bringing with him the songs of early 20th century St. Louis bluesman, Peetie Wheatstraw.

1966 began as an incredible year for me—formative, no turning back in terms of life choices. Franklin Rosemont and I returned from Paris in May 1966 after meeting Surrealist

founder, André Breton in February, Guy Debord of the Situationist International in March, English Situationist, Charles Radcliffe in April, UK Freedom Press anarchists in May, having begun on January 1 at the Paris Surrealist New Year's Eve party organized and acted out by Breton's group.

An anarchist friend from New York City, Jonathan Leake, editor of *Resurgence*, the mimeographed organ of the Resurgence Youth Movement, was in Chicago on June 6. We were sure that the apocalypse was at hand—666. Writer Robert Anton Wilson encountered Jonathan and began his book (later a trilogy) *Illuminatus!* with characters inspired by Solidarity Bookshop participants.

What path to take? For me, in my twenties, the path was not found at the university, though ardently sought. It was in Surrealism I found a key of great value, the possibility of social and cultural change, of meaningful revolution—the re-enchancement of everyday life. Surrealists, masters of the image, understood its use to penetrate the mind, beyond conditioning, beyond repression, to liberate thought.

As one or two people or a small group, we realized we had little power against the armed might of the state. But we knew that human beings live not only in a bureaucratic political state, not only in the world of work, but in an ocean of images, words, symbolic actions, gestures, magic—a complex network. One where there is a constant struggle between the forces of repression and liberation.

While Surrealism has discovered the method behind the creative process, art and poetry, it does not stop there. It de-

mands a creative political perspective and action in the real world. We are not academics, not outside observers of politics, of life. That is one of the major differences between Surrealism and art (abstract expressionism, minimalism or other styles). Our politics and our anti-religious stand tend to make us pariahs for the art world, but so much the worse for the art world.

As Surrealists, we defend the marvels of the world, defend the wilderness of the world, both in the natural world and in ourselves. We are in love with the natural world, from the Tar-digrade to the Great Blue Whale. We understand the power of the image to remake the world, to remake it after our own desires.

For Surrealism, “the poet is a seer,” as Emerson wrote. Realizing that revolutionary change that does not change everyday life cannot be lasting, Surrealism in its ever-changing, multi-dimensional perspective has that potential. It demands constantly a reevaluation of all values.

Our world today: fantastic, horrible, creative, repressive, nothing can be changed, impossible, everything is possible, all quicksand, it's the end of the world, tomorrow never comes, perhaps a new beginning. Every day we face a choice.

Armed with our Surrealism, mad love, poetry, and humor, we must choose total Liberation.

Penelope Rosemont edited *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology*, and wrote *Dreams & Everyday Life: Surrealism, Rebel Worker, Sods & the Seven Cities of Cibola*, Charles H. Kerr, publisher, a memoir.

## Foreign Anarchists as Boogymon Monsters Under the Bed

**Transnational Radicals: Italian Anarchists in Canada and the U.S., 1915–1940**

Travis Tomchuk

University of Manitoba Press, 2015, 260pp

STEVE IZMA

An illustration early in Travis Tomchuk's *Transnational Radicals* demonstrates the popular press's view of anarchists immediately following the 1886 Haymarket Square Police Riot in Chicago: Johann Most, a radical anarchist, is presented by *Harper's Weekly* as a maniacal figure waving a sword and a flag, threatening the reader with “Socialistic War,” while several other well-armed anarchists dive under beds in fear.

The anarchists have enough foreign characteristics to feed the xenophobia of the comfortable classes of the era, and Tomchuk suggests that societal unrest had thrust anarchists into the important boogeyman role: “the monsters under the bed.”

But the authorities failed to build a wall and the anarchists kept arriving. Tomchuk pieces together a multi-dimensional picture of the lives of those who got through—Italian anarchist men and women active in Canada and the United States during the first half of the 20th century.



Although the book has a typical scholarly structure—historical context, summaries of published studies, data from archives, and lots of footnotes (many of which make for very interesting tangential reading)—Tomchuk has restructured what was originally a thesis and fleshed out a number of narratives and interviews into an engaging story.

His straight-forward, jargon-free survey of the related literature, demonstrating his broad knowledge of anarchism is one of the book's delights.

Fear of the surveillance state be damned, Tomchuk's main source of information is the Italian fascist govern-

ment archives, now accessible online. Of course, one of the last things that anarchists want is for the state to write their history, but Tomchuk turns this material on its head, likely causing Mussolini's cops to similarly turn in their graves.

Starting with an online search of 39 Italian anarchists in Canada and over five thousand in the U.S., Tomchuk chose to examine the actual physical files in Rome of 36 of the Canadians and 45 of the Americans. While he managed to uncover the stories of several women through other means, he noted that the police seemed interested almost exclusively in men.

Much of the information in Rome clearly came from Canadian and U.S. authorities, demonstrating how keen our home-grown cops were to collaborate with their fascist equivalents, especially in deporting migrant anarchists to brutal and fatal jails in Italy.

**T**OMCHUK VISITED OTHER ARCHIVES and interviewed numerous people familiar with Italian migrant anarchism, including friends of the *Fifth Estate* such as Federico Arcos of Windsor and Libera Martignogo Bortolotti. Many anarchists in southern Ontario and the Detroit area knew Bortolotti's husband, Attilio (often known as Art Bartell), a generous supporter of anarchist projects and a prominent figure in many of the book's stories.

Tomchuk also read through many issues of two prominent Italian-language anarchist newspapers, *Il Martello* (*The Hammer*) and *L'adunata dei Refrattori* (*Call of the Disobedient*), both published in the New York City area, but circulated and highly influential among the communities discussed. These newspapers also represented an ideological split among Italian anarchists, which Tomchuk characterizes as a tension between "organizationalists" (essentially an anarcho-syndicalist tendency) and "anti-organizationalists."

Among the consequences, as the author shows, were the negative effects on attempts of the larger community to organize support for anarchists in need, especially those arrested and in danger of deportation.

The shape of immigrant anarchist life that Tomchuk constructs out of these materials has both social and political dimensions, exemplified in the anarchist circles commonly formed by the migrant radicals. Their meeting places became centers for fundraising, education, and cultural events such as dances and theatrical performances.

Tomchuk found evidence of such circles in the U.S. at East Boston, Needham, Newark, Paterson, Brooklyn, Pittston (Pennsylvania), Detroit, Chicago, Gary (Indiana), San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Toronto, Sault Ste. Marie (Ontario), and Windsor had the most active circles in Canada.

Migrant Italian anarchists tended to live in communities that shared their language and dialect and this cemented the strong sense of solidarity among them. This also compensated for the loss of extended family support systems, something capitalism has always consciously undermined in order to gain control over its pool of labor, a pool increasingly characterized by atomized, transient workers, rather than those rooted in community.



Sacco and Vanzetti, Italian immigrant anarchists murdered by the state of Massachusetts in 1927 following a frame-up murder trial.

The author frequently comments on gender issues in these anarchist communities. Although he discusses the difficulty in finding historical materials describing the role of women, one tendency became clear: "not all of the Italian movement's men saw female comrades as equals. In fact, at least a few felt women had no place at all in the anarchist movement." Nonetheless, "it did provide a space for [women] to resist gender oppression, address specific issues of concern, and, in a few cases, become well known for their abilities."

The flourishing of the Catholic Church and its conservative power in North American immigrant communities made it a regular target of anarchist criticism. Yet despite the strong anti-religious position of virtually everyone Tomchuk mentions, the movement in some distressing ways reflected the doctrinal tendencies of the Church.

For example, Tomchuk quotes from an ad that appeared in *Il Martello* in 1931: "Bring your kids. . . [Carlo] Tresca will speak in English. . . to make them know the faith that animates their parents."

**F**ORTUNATELY, SOME COMMENTATORS saw the danger in perpetuating catechisms, both Catholic and anarchistic. So, while one newspaper commentator argued that it was the "mission" of mothers to understand their role as educators and liberators of their sons (no mention of daughters in this case), another criticized, as Tomchuk puts it, "the ways in which male comrades trained their sons to memorize revolutionary poems and songs, but without providing sufficient context with respect to their meaning and import."

However, passing anarchist ideas on to their children became problematic in other ways as well: "As the 1940s wore on, the Italian Anarchists. . . grew older and their children, who had assimilated into Canadian and American culture, did not replenish the movement's ranks."

Tomchuk points to the first generation's strongly ethnic mode of being anarchists as one of the problems. One has to ask: At what point does ethnicity cease to be community and begin to be claustrophobic?

Steve Izma is a typographer and programmer in Kitchener, Ontario.

# Brazil Impeachment & the Left Media

HOWARD BESSER

As Bill Weinberg points out (see page 14), much of the left media shamefully supports odious forces simply because they oppose the U.S. A contemporary example of a significant skewing of the facts can be seen in its overwhelmingly biased coverage of the 2016 impeachment of Brazil's president, Dilma Rousseff.

Journalists from *The Nation*, *The Intercept*, and *Democracy Now!* have a history of supporting the Workers' Party (PT- Partido dos Trabalhadores) under both President Lula Inácio da Silva who came to power in 2003 and President Dilma (both are generally referred to by their first names) who succeeded him in 2011. The PT embraced social democratic politics, and in Lula's first term in office, the party instituted many welfare reforms raising millions of people from poverty into the working class. But the programs made no real attempt to empower them.

Instead of enabling the poor to take control over their lives, the PT instituted a system of dependence, where the poor and working class were encouraged to support the PT and rely upon them to provide for their needs. Because of this, many were willing to overlook the vast looting of the treasury orchestrated by PT officials.

**SINCE GAINING POWER**, the PT has been notably pro-development. This follows a model of leftist regimes in other countries that justify industrialization and deforestation as legitimate methods for driving an economy that will generate surpluses used to help the underclasses. Particularly under Dilma, the PT has repeatedly clashed with environmental and indigenous groups, striking workers, and the LGBT community.

Reading North American left media coverage of Brazil, one would know nothing about Dilma championing the fourth largest dam in the world, flooding indigenous villages, killing populations of near-extinct species; increasing oil production and exploration; halting the distribution of "anti-homophobia kits" in high schools claiming they are "inappropriate for children;" taking a hard line against public



One of dozens of high schools occupied for months in Spring 2016 in Rio de Janeiro. An example of the many social movement actions the US left media seldom mentions. This was May 7, the week before Dilma was impeached.

employee strikes; and deploying military troops to end dam construction strikes.

For a decade before coming to power, the PT supported Brazil's Landless Workers Movement (MST - Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra), and the Party promised to institute much of the agrarian reform promoted by the MST. Consequently, many in the MST felt betrayed when Lula turned over only about the same amount of land to collective settlements as had his conservative predecessor. Dilma has turned over far less.

In recent years, most in the MST no longer expect help from the government in their struggle, but many of them still vote for the PT fearing that conservative politicians might crack down on them more harshly, as the newest Brazilian President Michel Temer has started to do.

**PADDING GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS** that require kickbacks from contractors to politicians was perfected by the PT, resulting in the country's two largest corruption scandals in the past 30 years. The PT created the Mensalão bribery scandal where public funds were funneled through government contracts to pay legislators \$12,000 per month for their votes. About \$43 million was looted from the national treasury by the Workers Party.

In an even larger money-laundering scandal known as the "Car Wash" because it originated in a gas station, the state-controlled oil company, Petrobras, grossly overpaid large construction contractors who kept part of the extra funds and kicked back the rest to politicians. \$3 billion was looted from the state-controlled oil company as part of this scheme.

Some PT leaders and legislators are already serving jail time for these scandals. More than one hundred current

members of Congress have been either indicted or convicted of receiving kick-backs from these schemes.

The PT also has a long, sordid history of marginalizing independent voices, and trying to represent itself as the only possible alternative to the right. They have repeatedly labeled their opponents on the left as tools of conservatives, and many activists have been forced to leave the Party, or have endured PT smear campaigns.

### LEFT MEDIA COVERAGE

Leftist journalists repeatedly refer to the impeachment of Dilma as a "coup" overturning the "will of the people." US journalist Glenn Greenwald, appearing on an August 29 Democracy Now! TV program, called it "a complete reversal of democracy," asserting that those judging her are super-corrupt while she is not the least bit tainted.

Greenwald said the impeachment would result in a radical change of policy because Temer and Dilma come from different parties, but failed to note that they were elected together on a coalition ticket. He and other journalists also neglect to mention that Dilma chose Temer as her running mate, with full knowledge of his conservative views because the PT needed a coalition partner in order to get enough votes for the presidential ticket.

The left media casts Dilma as an innocent victim of the far right. Temer, who replaced her as president, is from the conservative Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB). He is odious, but that doesn't make Dilma a victim who should be supported. One way of characterizing them is by comparing Temer to Donald Trump and Dilma to Hillary Clinton.

In a later segment of the same Democracy Now! broadcast, Greenwald castigated the media for being so afraid of a Trump victory that they are letting Hillary Clinton "waltz into the White House free of challenge or questioning." Yet earlier his fear of the Brazilian right had him doing exactly the same thing with Dilma. But this is not surprising; he is well-known in Brazil as an apologist for Dilma.

### CONCLUSION

Most left media coverage of Brazil has been emphatically binary. Powerful forces (in the form of the PT) opposing a threat from the right receive uncritical support, while less powerful voices (like environmental, indigenous, LGBT, and climate activists) receive no coverage at all when they oppose or clash with the PT.

Little or nothing from activist voices make it into the left media except on rare occasions when they are not opposed by the PT. The US left media has painted Dilma and her party as innocent victims of a right-wing power grab. But while the right has certainly tried to grab power, Dilma and her party are far from innocent victims.

No mention is made of the key role played by the PT in creating the most recent corruption scandals, and they are only discussed when highlighting the right-wing figures who

**Less powerful voices, like environmental, indigenous, LGBT, & climate activists, receive no media coverage at all when they oppose or clash with the ruling Brazilian party.**

are caught up in them, without noting that it was the PT that initiated the scandals that benefited these right-wing politicians.

These elements of the left media have turned disgusting politicians into admirable martyrs by purposely hiding contextual facts. This shameful binary division of the world into "good guys" and "bad guys" is reminiscent of U.S. leftist apologists for Stalin. As many of us learned through previous struggles, one can oppose one evil without having to support another lesser evil. To oppose Temer and his conservative policies doesn't mean that we need to support Dilma and her corrupt, pro-development party.

With two bad choices, the real answer is a third alternative.

Howard Besser has been involved with activist anti-authoritarian politics for 50 years. He has Brazilian family and spends two months a year in Brazil.

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# Anarchism in Latin America

Continued from Page 24

these tendencies could be described as dominant or ascendant.

Barret felt that the diversity of the anarchist movement in Latin America must be interpreted as a consequence of the lack of a single paradigm that takes into account the complexity of prevailing socio-cultural fragmentation. But this diversity also provides an opportunity for generating deeper understandings of the intricacies of contemporary capitalism:

However, he also recognized the difficulty of communication and cooperation between the various anarchist tendencies, and the lack of a capacity to develop a shared paradigm. We need to confront the fact that all of the tendencies have limitations, emphasizing different anachronisms and sectarianisms that don't have a future. Strictly following the texts of any one individual or group only winds up generating yet another piece of propaganda.

## WHAT WE OWE EACH OTHER

Since Barret, nobody else has dealt with the issue of how to connect the various anarchist groups into a coordinated movement, how to respond to the movement's diversity or how to face current dilemmas and future challenges. There have been some interesting theoretical efforts from various anarchist tendencies. But the absence of mutual support and a shared paradigm, continues exacerbating the lack of ideas for creating a collective movement that can go beyond the limits of any of the different tendencies.

Anarchists in Latin America have not been able to elaborate a perspective that adequately addresses issues related to economic development through extractive industries and natural resource exports, the emergency created for leftist governments by falling prices, or the problem of the Cuban revolution being taken as an emancipatory model for the region. Inadequate responses to the latter two problems have been of great importance recently.

From early on, most anarchists, including in Latin America, failed to critically evaluate the so-called Cuban Revolution. Even during those periods when anarchists on the island were persecuted, imprisoned and executed by the state, there was a shameful lack of solidarity that should never be forgotten.

This was especially notable among most anarchist groups in Latin America. There was a lack of critical thinking. As

many anarchists in the region fell under the influence of a Marxist oriented anti-imperialist vision of national liberation struggles, Cuba came to be seen as the prime model to be emulated.

For a long time, the topic of repression of anarchists and other negative aspects of the Castro regime were considered politically taboo in most Latin American anarchist circles. This can be seen in the scarcity of literature produced on the topic.

For instance, Frank Fernández's book *El anarquismo en Cuba* (Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo, 2000) [*Anarchism in Cuba* ((See Sharp Press, 2001)], was published in several languages, including Spanish, but was not widely circulated in Latin America. Daniel Barret also wrote extensively criticizing the Cuban Revolution, however, curiously none of his articles dealing with the subject were included in the book of his writings cited above.

Anarchists also failed to critically comprehend and adequately respond to the emergence of national-populist groups and governments during the last century. This failure continued with regard to the leftist governments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Anarcho-syndicalists characterized most of these governments as simply fascist, as they had the government of Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina. This mistaken diagnosis led to a bad strategy.

The dominance of Marxists on the left from the 1960s through 1988, generated a great deal of confusion. Anarchists were not up to criticizing and contesting the policies of leftists in power. So, even after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which created optimal conditions for the rebirth of anarchism worldwide, in Latin America, the image of the Castro regime remained healthy and whole, thanks to continuing support from leftists.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the conditions for a resurgence of the anarchist movement were promising. Decentralized and horizontally organized action networks developed within the emerging anti-globalization movement. New methods of protest were being sought that went beyond and around the limitations and promises of a bureaucratized left



**An increasing number of leftist governments in Latin America—with their vaunted successes in redistribution of wealth and electoral popularity—neutralized the growth of autonomist anti-state and anarchist movements**

that had been integrated into the political-economic system.

However, an increasing number of leftist governments in Latin America—with their vaunted successes in redistribution of wealth and electoral popularity—neutralized the growth of autonomist anti-state and anarchist movements. As Barret noted, consideration of an anarchist perspective on revolutionary change was postponed in the face of leftist demands for defense of these states, based on electoral popularity and tactical necessity. This enabled a new form of institutionalized domination to take hold.

## ANARCHISTS AND THE STATE

Anarchists were unable to offer adequate critical evaluations of left-wing governments' policies or to develop questions and answers and assemble resources to deal with ongoing problems due to a lack of a unifying revolutionary paradigm.

Some anarchists considered the new leftist form of government to be only a variant of capitalistic domination. Others were faithful to their principles and didn't support this kind of regime, but neither were they openly critical. Finally, those anarchists most influenced by Marxism and focused on the greater enemy, the U.S. government, supported the left-wing coalitions, promoting so-called popular power in the name of organized class-struggle anarchism, and denigrating the other anarchist positions as individualist.

The lack of common understandings also impeded the development of a shared critical response to the expansion of extractivist capitalism.

Marxists, exulting in the political and economic prosperity of the region, assured others that the leftist states would be able to withstand the power of the neo-liberal consensus centered in the U.S.

Some anarchists, although not the majority, joined the Marxists in asserting that the extractivist policies followed by these governments were justified because: 1) The sovereignty of the states had to be strengthened and protected at any price, including their prerogative to engage in energy extraction; 2) in a multipolar world, all investments not under the American flag were welcome; and 3) revenues from extractive industries enabled the development of redistributive policies to combat poverty.

True, there were anarchists who were opposing mining throughout the continent, but their opposition was considered to be marginal by those who enthusiastically embraced the left in power.

## POSSIBILITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Anarchists in Latin America now have opportunities similar to those experienced in Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall. Possibilities are opened up by the softening of Cuban state capitalism, Cuba's fading as an emancipatory model, the eclipse of the left in power (demonstrating the contradictions and limits of state-centered revolution), and the understanding of new polycentric modes of domination of globalized

capitalism.

Anarchists need a fusion of new theory and new forms of organization to create practices for meeting the challenges of our time. We need to retake the offensive in social struggles through a new revolutionary paradigm.

The challenges are as great as the possibilities. It is clear that there have been fundamental changes in the world that oblige us to develop new theoretical concepts that go beyond classical anarchism. Indeed, we must throw away our crutches—whether stemming from intellectual laziness or sectarianism—and venture to walk on our own feet.

Original title: "Anarquismo en América Latina hoy: El reto de abandonar las muletas" posted June 1, 2016 on Rafael Uzcátegui's blog at [rafaeluzcategui.wordpress.com](http://rafaeluzcategui.wordpress.com). *El Libertario* is available in English at [nodo50.org/ellibertario/english](http://nodo50.org/ellibertario/english)

## Literature not flyers.

S. LAPLAGE

*Small Beauty*

Jia Qing Wilson-Yangas

Metonymy Press, 2016, \$16.95CAD



During a discussion hosted by Montreal's L'Insoumise anarchist bookstore and DIRA anarchist library, the novelist, Lola Lafon, was asked how she includes her politics in her novels.

(A review of her 2014 *We Are the Birds of the Coming Storm* appears in the Summer 2015 *Fifth Estate*.)

Lola replied that she writes literature and not political flyers, although her books are very political. This beautifully written novel, set in British Columbia, depicts transpersons, people of Chinese descent, and incidents of violence towards women.

There are also aspects of the main character's life that are equally important, including death, mourning, the need for solitude, friendship, and discovering hidden parts of a dead grandmother's life.

While identities are important in this novel, it is not about identity politics, which limit people. The main character has equally important identities, as we all do, but they don't define themselves by their wardrobe or a Chinese Canadian who aspires to be a politician or become rich.

Radical feminist politics underlie the novel without it being a tract or propaganda. It is truly literature.

Metonymy Press is based in Tio'tia:ke (Montreal), unceded Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) territory. [metonymypress.com](http://metonymypress.com).

S. Laplage is a member of the Montreal International Anarchist Theatre Collective and L'Insoumise anarchist bookstore.

# Crime As Spectacle

Continued from Page 20

man. Rather than destroying authority, the two can instead play off of each other, enhancing and amplifying each other in a twisted feedback loop.

This was part of the point of the 1971 film "A Clockwork Orange." Director Stanley Kubrick portrayed the idea that as society became more totalitarian, delinquency would become more brutal, which then provides justification for totalitarianism. The criminal becomes more extreme, even adopting the persona of evil, as systems of power and control use this as justification to enhance themselves and escalate.

Systems of control no longer rely only on repression. They are now often based on recuperation. French social theorist Michel Foucault, in his 1977 *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, wrote:

"One would be forced to suppose that the prison, and no doubt punishment in general, is not intended to eliminate offences, but rather to distinguish them, to distribute them, to use them; that is not so much that they render docile those who are liable to transgress the law, but that they tend to assimilate the transgression of the laws in a general tactic of subjection."

**S**ystems of control do not attempt to stop crime, but rather direct it towards its own ends. The gangster fulfills a social role (just as any other profession), preventing people from taking action in the social realm. Or, even worse, the historical use of the criminal class by fascist movements has allowed them into the political realm as enforcers for agents of control.

According to Foucault, "Delinquency, solidified by a personal system centered upon the prison, thus represents a diversion of illegality for the illicit circuits of profit and power of the dominant class." Delinquents were long used as low level tools of law enforcement, such as "informers and *agent provocateurs*." This further developed after the 1789 French revolution. Delinquents were used in "the organization of a sub-police working directly with the legal police and capable if necessary of becoming a sort of parallel army," writes Foucault.

Illegalism can be an important part of development, as a way of confronting fears of trouble. It is probably a necessary first step. It also highlights the dangerous overlaps between anti-authoritarianism and authoritarianism. At this point, it can go either way. Illegalism must be transcended to an *a*-legal status; an outlaw status (in a literal sense).

Beyond illegalism, not towards a new morality, but towards an opposition based on resistance, refusal, and play. It is always necessary to seek pressure points of resistance against the monolithic mall whose walls have disappeared, allowing control to become an ectoplasmic goo, colonizing all of ev-

eryday life.

Struggle onward regardless of possible failure. It is in this onward struggle that illegalism provides its greatest benefit. Refusal to submit is the ultimate crime. This continual refusal of

the nexus of power is a path outside of law.

A hundred years ago, Renzo Navatore wrote, "Life, for us, is a wild flower that has to be cultivated on the frightening edge of immeasurable abysses."

FE note: Navatore's literary work is available in *The Collected Writing of Renzo Navatore*, translated by Wolfi Landstreicher, from Ardent Press; ArdentPress.com.

A review of the book by Jason Rodgers is on our web site Archive page in our Spring/Summer 2014 edition, issue #391. Jason can be contacted at POB 10894, Albany NY 12201.

## Another Anti-Authoritarian Put Away

Continued from Page 23

given a gown (I refused!), no other personal belongings on me. I gave my long list of meds and nutrients to be forever screwed with by them.

A few times in my past when I've had depressive crashes I learned that going to the mental joint had a positive placebo effect on me—I was out fast in these places that are little more than advanced babysitters in a very minimal security atmosphere. Staff were on their toes, Drs acted like Drs. But not this time...

Right away the lawbreaking was rife. The famed 72 hour notice was not paid attention to. It's a safeguard for inmates that when they want to leave all they have to do is write "I want to leave the hospital," and they have to release you within 3 days (of course they wait 3 days for the money) or get a court order to keep you. I wrote mine right away in my 1st 3 full inpatient disappearances and they were paid no attention to nor were others.

Right away the professionalism was in collapse—the staff at St. Vincent's were uncredentialed (not that that really means anything!). They abandoned the nurse station abandoning us. They mostly hid their names. Policy was control not help.

Harassment was 24 hours. "Get up!" "Lay down!" "Go to your room!" "Make your bed!" "Take a shower!" "You'll have to wait for your med; the 'nurse' is (illegally on another) break!"

They had it in particularly for me as I was the 3-North unit revolutionary, jailhouse lawyer, inmate Dr. etc. I responded with plenty of "Fuck Yous!"

# Letters

Continued from Page Two

He popularized a rationalist, analytic approach to a body of ideas that was previously dominated by continental nonsense.

He weaved into anti-civ thought some relevant sociobiological ideas of human nature (although he did not call them that); he critiqued humanist values, which had previously been the basis of anarchist and primitivist critiques of civilization; and so on.

Perhaps most importantly, he got these ideas before the public in a far more effective manner than anyone previously. As recent media attention around him has shown, even now he and his ideas continue to draw an audience.

The staff's seemingly pacifistic argument against Kaczynski is just as mistaken. I do not deny a person's right to be a pacifist: their principles are inarguable anyway.

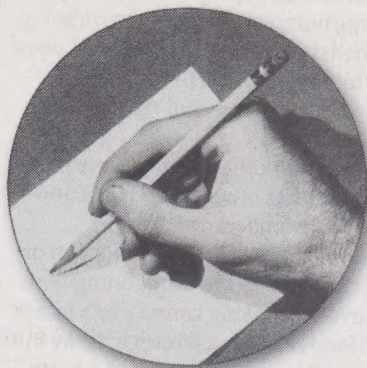
But if we agree with Kaczynski's premises, there is no way to maintain one's integrity and not admit that acting on these premises necessarily comes with some degree of violence.

I could go on, addressing, for instance, FE's claim that Kaczynski's targets were "innocent," but I've written a thorough analysis of Kaczynski and his Freedom Club (FC) already.

I encourage those who are interested in a more nuanced overview of the man and his story to check it out at [darkmountain.net/blog/ted-kaczynski-and-why-he-matters](http://darkmountain.net/blog/ted-kaczynski-and-why-he-matters).

**Live wild or die,**  
**John Jacobi**  
Editor, *Hunter/Gatherer*  
[wildism.org/hg](http://wildism.org/hg)

**Fifth Estate replies:** So, let's see. If we think someone is a psychopathic mass murderer, worthy only of disdain and disavowal because he set booby traps that killed and maimed a couple of dozen people loosely connected to the technological system we are all a part of, and who tried to bring down an airliner that any of us or people we love could have been on, we're pacifists. Interesting argument.



Some writers are solely intellectuals and judged by their words alone. Others, particularly revolutionary ones, are assessed by how they act on their ideas in the real world.

An example is German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, who wrote profoundly about loss in the modern world, but invalidated all that he penned by his support and cooperation with the Nazis.

Kaczynski has had his 15 minutes of fame because of his murderous rampage. Those who promote his writings or apologize for his bloody acts only serve to make critiques of technology and civilization seem that much more unpalatable to people.

## FIFTH ESTATE UNDER SURVEILLANCE

The final event in the Detroit Historical Museum's year long exhibition of the 50th anniversary of this publication, dealt with police and government spying in the 1960s and '70s, and how it continues today.

The audience heard FE staffer, Peter Werbe, left, with the paper's founder, Harvey Ovshinsky, read from their police files. The document is an enlargement of a Detroit Police Red Squad infiltrator's report of a 1972 staff meeting. It was part of a court-ordered distribution of files kept on the FE and other radicals.

A representative of the ACLU discussed how police surveillance today targets Muslims, Black Lives Matter, anarchists, and radical environmentalists.

## Apologies Unneeded

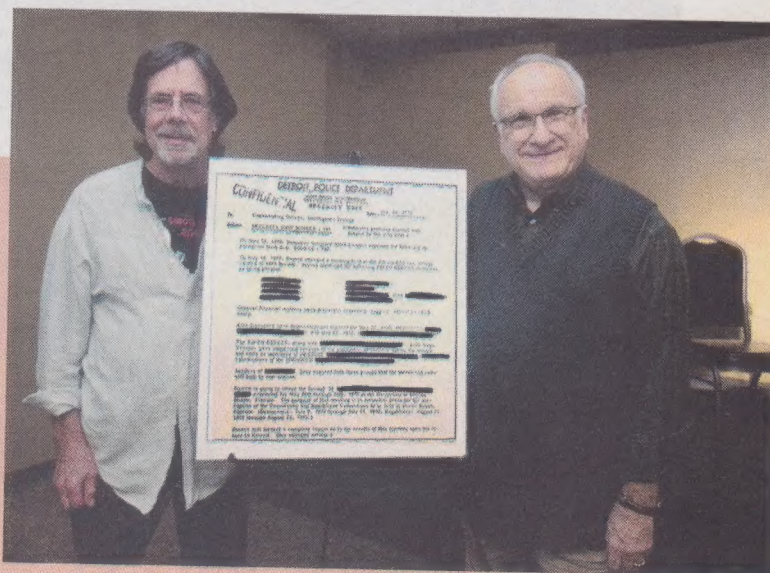
I believe I'm the "anti-war candidate for a U.S. congressional district," endorsed in a 1966 *Fifth Estate* and referred to in "The Elections, Donald Trump, & Wilhelm Reich," Summer 2016 issue.

I have tried to live down my 1966 Democratic Party candidacy ever since. I hope to be forgiven as I was young and not yet aware of the damage one does running for office in the capitalist parties in the United States.

Some in the *Fifth Estate* at the time, as well as other friends and comrades in various socialist or communist parties, were correct when they urged me not to run as a Democrat. But at the time I was, at best, a progressive young lawyer just learning his way in the movement for true revolutionary change.

I had not yet learned that the only way to end the U.S. government's imperialist war in Vietnam was by mass action in the streets, including peaceful protests as well as civil disobedience actions.

Happily, my role in the movement against that war, together with other so-



—Rebecca Cook

cial justice struggles I've been involved in during the ensuing decades of my life, have enlightened me to the folly of my earlier belief that one could obtain meaningful social change in capitalist America through its corrupt electoral process.

Unhappily, people who should have learned that same lesson, like that good man Bernie Sanders, have not. So, while his young supporters are to be forgiven for believing we have a democracy in this country and that they can bring about the revolution they seek through the U.S. electoral system, Brother Sanders should know better by now.

By running in the capitalist Democratic Party primary he mis-educated masses of young women and men who should, instead, be looking to true socialists for answers, and who should be protesting in the streets on behalf of the revolutionary changes they want and the people of this country so desperately need.

**Jim Lafferty**  
Executive Director Emeritus,  
National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles

**Peter Werbe replies:** Jim Lafferty has contributed enormously to building movements opposing U.S. imperial wars from Vietnam to Iraq. His legal work for civil liberties and civil rights is also exemplary.

His anti-war organizing in Detroit and Los Angeles has always been independent of the Democratic Party.

However, there is no need for Jim or any of us active in the burgeoning anti-war movement half a century ago to ask to be "forgiven" for a strategic foray into the electoral process even into a party which was conducting the war.

In 1966, anti-war activity hadn't taken on the mass proportions that it quickly did, and few Americans realized the enormity of the U.S. invasion of Vietnam and that it was based on a fabricated justification.

The Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam, which Lafferty headed, called for immediate withdrawal from Southeast Asia contrasted with more tepid calls for "Negotiations Now" from less radical peace groups.

The Detroit anti-war group fielded Jim as a candidate against an old line

Democratic Party politician, U.S. Rep. Martha Griffith, who repeated the lies for the Vietnam invasion which we countered with anti-war literature and speeches.

The U.S. military had already begun committing war crimes against the civilian population, information which was brought to the select precincts we targeted since we hadn't the resources to tackle the entire district.

Surprisingly, or maybe not so, Lafferty won the precincts we worked in going door to door with our anti-war message. And, what if by some miracle he had prevailed and been elected to Congress and exposed the lies and the carnage of that war. Certainly, the Vietnamese victims of the U.S. war machine would have been overjoyed.

Two years later, the *Fifth Estate* advocated mutinies in the U.S. military, victory for the Viet Cong, and supported Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver for President on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket. Ten years later, the paper advocated the traditional anarchist position on voting of abstention.

We all grow and change.

#### Cancel Sub

My son is an inmate in South Carolina and would like you to remove his name and cancel any mailings to him. The prison is not letting them in and causing trouble for him.

Here is his information:

**Name withheld**  
**Columbia, S.C.**

**Fifth Estate reply:** Prison mailrooms are notoriously arbitrary with rules governing incoming mail which can, and are often used to refuse almost anything. It usually depends on the politics of the prison employee and/or how the prisoner addressee is regarded by the administration.

Sometimes, it's just plain stupid. A couple of years ago, a *Fifth Estate* article about Vietnam was illustrated by the iconic photo of a very young Vietnamese girl whose village had been struck by U.S. napalm and whose clothing had been burned off of her.

A prison rejected the entire issue stating the image represented "inappropriate sexually explicit material." We cut out the offending page from the issue



This chalking got four people arrested in Las Vegas. Chalk washes off; blood stains remain.

## INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF CHALKING

Activists in Brattleboro, Vt. are calling for an International Day of Chalking Against State Violence, on Saturday, June 3. Autonomous actions with no central coordination; just get your chalks, go out by yourself or with others, and chalk about war, racism, police killings, prisons, sexual assaults or other issues.

July 18 is the fourth Annual "Chalk the Police State" Day organized by CopBlock.org. Careful, though. Charges for conspiracy to place graffiti and defacing property were brought against four people in Las Vegas after they chalked against police brutality. And, others have faced criminal prosecution.

and mailed it back to the prisoner.

This same photo was flagged by Facebook in September for "violating standards regarding inappropriate posts," and removed, but following protests the social network relented and allowed its display.

### Congrats from Portugal

On the occasion of your 50th anniversary that makes your magazine the oldest anarchist publication in the United States and one of the oldest in the world, I would like to salute you remembering the importance that it has had and continues to have for me.

I first read the *Fifth Estate* magazine in Lisbon, Portugal, after the left military coup of 1974 that became the beginning of a social revolution.

I was a young member of a libertarian communist collective which had a small bookshop in the center of Lisbon where we sold similar publications from various countries.

In the context of the social unrest of that period, my first readings of the FE were not sufficiently aware, but some time later they began to be. And, it was a discovery.

The links that the FE established between contemporary radical thought, historical anarchism, the indigenous cultures of the Americas and of other regions of the world, as well as technology as a central element of power and tyranny, began to change the views that I had then. All this was a liberating stimulation that led me to open new mental windows.

For example, despite having lived in France in exile for five years (for refusing to fight in the colonial war in Angola that

the Portuguese fascist regime waged there for twelve years), I was unaware of the essential work of Jacques Ellul, which I got to know thanks to the FE.

Later, I had the great pleasure of meeting in Europe with two members of the FE, with whom I remain friends to this day. Through them, I got in touch with other stimulating creativity in the United States such as works by Fredy Perlman, some of which are being translated into Portuguese and published by a friend.

For all this, which represents a lot to me, I send to the Fifth Estate Collective a fraternal and grateful greeting of friendship.

**Júlio Henriques**  
Portalegre, Portugal

### Less Self-Congrats

More news, letters, current project updates/rundowns, under-told anarchist history; less analysis, criticism, self-congratulations would also be good.

Anyway, greetings from the one-time anarchist capital of the world.

**Cooper Otte**  
Eugene, Ore.

**Fifth Estate replies:** News is tough to report in a publication which only appears three times a year since current events are so quickly dated.

We try to report on anarchist projects and there is usually one an issue. For the last 40 years of our existence, we have concentrated mostly on critiques of issues and ideas, which is what we think has sustained us. About the self-congratulations for

our 50 years of publishing? No apologies!

Thanks for your continuing support and interest.

### Soon Free

I am a federal prisoner who will be released in 2019.

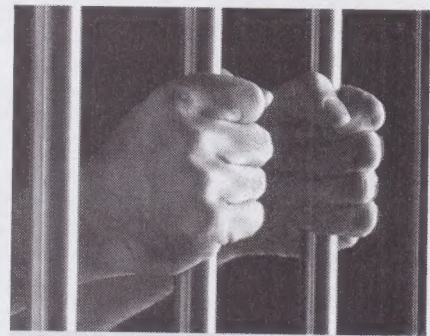
I am more nervous to be leaving prison than ever before. I've never seen

such blatant disrespect for the rule of law as demonstrated recently by the police. I don't know enough about my rights as an ex-felon to know what to do or say to make sure I am not harassed and taken advantage of.

Do you know of publications that I can write that have Cop Watches or education for ex-felons against the police?

**Name Withheld**  
Winton N.C.

**FE Reply:** See information below.



## Resources for Prisoners & Supporters

**Prison Legal News**, a publication that can put prisoners in touch with news and resources. P.O. Box 1151, 1013 Lucerne Ave., Lake Worth FL 33460.

### StopPrisonProfiteers.Org

Challenges companies that rip-off prisoners and their families on basic services.

### PrisonEcology.org

Exposes environmental violations in prisons.

### HumanRightsDefenseCenter.org

Coordinates many of the sites above.

### Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC)

A Industrial Workers of the World IWW.org. IWOC was one of the forces behind the September 9 nation-wide prison work strike.

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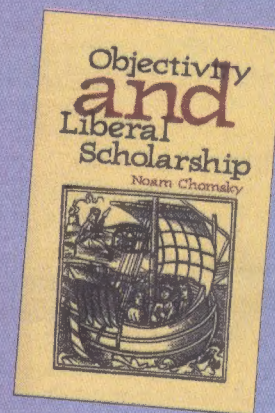
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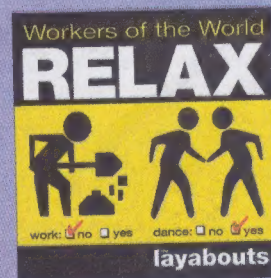
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